SEVENTY YEARS A MASTER

A HUNTSMAN'S REMINISCENCES

BY ...
GEORGE RACE

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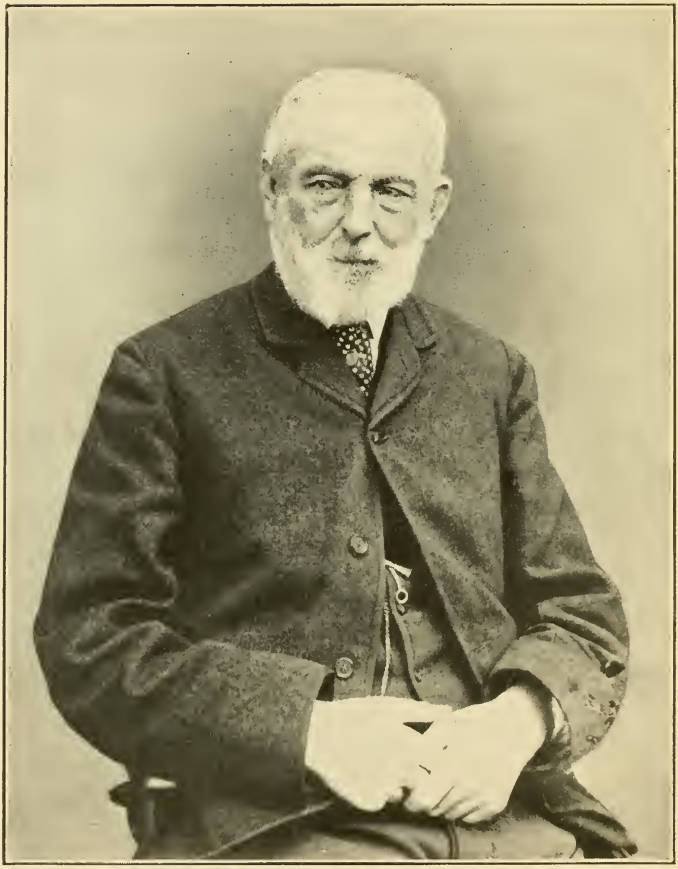

Photo] [*H. H. Ballard.*

Yours truly,

George Race.

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By GEORGE RACE.

Edited by A. W. MOORING,
From Notes compiled by E. R. POPE.

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PUBLISHED BY
HORACE COX, "FIELD" OFFICE, BREAM'S BUILDINGS,
LONDON.

WATERLOW AND SONS LIMITED,

PRINTERS,

LONDON AND DUNSTABLE.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Author of these reminiscences, Mr. George Race, the veteran Master of the Biggleswade Harriers, is the doyen of English hunting, and the oldest Master in the Kingdom.

To have followed hounds for eighty odd years, and to have been Master for those "three score years and ten" usually accounted the allotted span of human life, surely is a record which would invest that sportsman's recollections with more than ordinary interest. But that the achievements in the field herein narrated—in the Author's own style wherever possible—will themselves provide entertaining and instructive reading, is also the Editor's hope.

Mr. Race has now reached his 93rd year, but his intellect and memory remain as clear as ever, and it has afforded him a real and keen pleasure to again live over the old days while dictating these pages.

The remarkable circumstance is also worth recording that, on his 92nd birthday, November 23rd, 1910, the aged Master was again out with his beloved pack, following them as far as possible by means of his pony-trap, and evincing as great an interest and delight in the Chase as in the days when he carried the horn. In the evening he entertained a large birthday company of followers of his hounds, to whom he related some of the experiences occurring to him during his long career as a Master. His guests retired, marvelling at the old gentleman's wonderful virility, and greatly impressed with the uncommon interest attaching to many of his recollections. From many quarters came the desire for those narratives in permanent form; after some persuasion Mr. Race consented, and hence this volume will, in due course, be

placed in the hands of his numerous devoted friends and admirers.

The fact that Mr. Race has been " Seventy years a Master " has, naturally, attracted a far wider attention than among even his large circle of hunting friends and acquaintances. From time to time sporting writers have paid homage to the " Father of hare hunting." One of the latest of these tributes, from the pen of " Valesman," appeared in the *Morning Post* just previous to the birthday celebration mentioned above. " Valesman " wrote :—

" In glancing through the list of hounds so admirably compiled by certain weekly sporting papers recently it may not have escaped notice that Mr. George Race's name no longer appeared as Master of the Biggleswade Harriers. Now, as Mr. Race is the oldest Master of Hounds in the Kingdom,—indeed, his term of office has exceeded all others in the history of hunting—it occurred to me that it would be interesting to obtain some definite information in regard to his present connection with the Biggleswade pack. I am indebted to a Biggleswade correspondent for the following explanation :—

" 'Mr. George Race is nominally Master of the Harriers. They are kept at his place—Road Farm—and he looks after them, and still follows them in his

trap whenever he can do so. He ceases to be Master only as far as paying for their keep goes. Though in very good health, he thought it better to hand the hounds over to the country during his lifetime, but as long as he is alive we shall keep the hounds at his place, as he loves them and spends all his time looking after them.'

"What a charming picture—the old man, shortly entering upon his ninety-third year, as fond as ever of the pack which has given him so many happy days. Just fancy—eighty-odd years with the hounds, and keen to the last! It is difficult to realise that we still have with us a sportsman who saw Mr. C. Barnett, the famous Master of the Cambridgeshire, find his first cub in the first year of his long Mastership, namely 1829. Yet Mr. Race is that man, and he still loves to recall the many good runs he saw with Mr. Barnett and his hounds. As well as having seen him find his first fox, he saw him kill his last in his final season, thirty-eight years later.

"He is the son of Mr. John Race, of Fairfield, Biggleswade, well known in his day as 'Thistle Whipper' in the *Sporting Magazine*, and a nephew of Mr. S. Wells, one of the founders of 'Wells, Hogg & Lindsell,' the bankers, and also the founder of the Biggleswade Harriers. Mr. George Race was born at Stratton Lodge in November, 1818, was educated at the Rev. John Fell's School at Huntingdon, and has been Master

of the Biggleswade pack for the past seventy-one years, having succeeded his father in that position in 1840. He was always a careful and successful breeder of hounds, and used to have a preference for bitches over dogs, believing them to be quicker and handier. It is on record that until the Harrier Stud Book was compiled he chiefly relied upon the small stallion hounds of the Oakley Kennel. Anyhow, he built up an excellent pack, and sold the hounds at a good price in 1906, when he formed another kennel. As is mentioned by the correspondent whose remarks I have quoted above, Mr. Race still drives after his hounds, and has done so for some years past. Naturally he knows every inch of the country they cover, and is generally not far from them when they kill.

"There never was a veteran hunting man who would compare the sport of the present day favourably with that as he knew it years ago. . . .

"'I am sorry to say,' remarked Mr. Race a year ago, 'that I think hunting is not so good as it was fifty years ago, as I find people are not so inclined to join in the joys of the Chase as they did then.'

"His own recollections of sport are still remarkably vivid.

"'After having the hounds for over seventy years,' he says, 'I can recall many, very many, wonderfully good runs. I have repeatedly had several good runs with hares extending over five, six, seven, eight and nine miles.'

"The gallop to which he alludes as the finest he ever saw was with a deer. Let me give an account of it in Mr. Race's own words:

"'The best run I have ever seen in my long life occurred on October 19th, 1847, when we found a white hart at Mr. Whitbread's place at Southill, and run him close up to Leighton Buzzard, which is a good seventeen miles as the crow flies, and the horses were so beaten we were compelled to stop the hounds. The deer was only just before us, and was taken by some men who were cleaning out a pond a little more than half a mile from the place where we stopped them. Time, one hour and forty minutes.'

"Time and point show conclusively that this must have been a remarkable hunt. Contrary to the views of many people, Mr. Race has always held the opinion that it does harriers no harm to run a deer.

"'His own experience,' it was once stated, 'has convinced him that they may hunt deer for a fortnight on end, and then turn to hare without detriment to their steadiness. He has seen his own pack do this too frequently to have any doubts on the subject.'

"This venerable sportsman celebrates the anniversary of his birth on the twenty-third of the present month (November, 1910), and is entitled to the congratulations of the whole hunting world."

"Valesman's" graceful appreciation will be echoed in the heart of many another

follower of the hounds, particularly those of the Cambridgeshire country who have enjoyed the pleasure of being out with the veteran Master.

The full story of the famous run provided by that great white hart—an achievement still related with much enjoyment at many a Bedfordshire fireside, and one that will never be forgotten in the local annals of the Chase—is told at length by Mr. Race in the chapter "A Great Run." Throughout his long hunting career he has never quite got over the keen disappointment—not to say chagrin—so pithily expressed by him on the occasion of his visit some time later to that celebrated quarry, then preserved in the Royal Park at Windsor. Our veteran tells us of the difficulty he at first experienced in obtaining the sanction of the Head Ranger to again have a look at his old enemy; all who know him can imagine how he would bluster in face of such unreasonable opposition, how he most certainly *would* declare that, "having travelled all the way from Biggleswade to Windsor to see this

stag again, *he was going to see it* before they chucked him out of the Park" and he returned to the country where he found it. He *did* see it, of course, and when face to face again with that magnificent creature, the chief regret of his life sprang to his lips in the pregnant exclamation :—"A wonderful run. But —— you ! I did not take you !"

A career such as that enjoyed by Mr. Race, and which has been fruitful also in the provision of so much good sport for others, could not be allowed to pass unrecognised by his numerous personal friends and the many others still living whose pulses have been stirred by his inspiring "Tally-ho !" Indeed, on three occasions public recognition has been made of the great debt owing to him by all sportsmen in this part of the country.

The first of those testimonials consisted of a silver goblet and two silver tankards, and at the second presentation, Mr. Race received a large portrait in oils of himself and two and a half couples of his favourite hounds, and the third and last public recognition took place

when he celebrated his jubilee as Master of the Biggleswade pack, and when, to mark the fact that he had for a period of fifty years had charge of those hounds, and had during that long and continuous period found so much good sport for all, the farmers and gentlemen of the district at a public dinner, in 1890, presented him with an inscribed gold watch.

The story of how he built up the Biggleswade pack—a pack of harriers for long recognised as one of the best in England—is best told by himself. But it may be mentioned that the blood from that pack has gone far and wide, and high prices have been given for some of his hounds. On one occasion, when he was judging the Cambridgeshire Hounds at the Caxton Kennels, he was approached by a partner of the firm of Tattersall's, who guaranteed that, if they were put up for sale, the Biggleswade pack would at least realise 500 guineas.

When at last the time arrived for the veteran to hand over the horn, it is easy to imagine the great wrench that must have been

to him. But there is the ring of the true sportsman even in his valediction :—

"I have, when I come to look at it, had a very good innings, and have been a very lucky man. And nobody could have been supported by a better lot of sporting farmers and friends than it has been my lot to be mixed up with. That is a source of great comfort to me in my old age,—to think of the lots of friends who have stuck to me all through the chapter. I only wish I could have it all over again, but as we all know, there is an end to everything, and thus even the goodness and kindness of life's true friendships must one day have an end. Still the Chase calls to me, and as I see my beloved hounds start off on a nice hunting morning, and as I watch old Hasty, and Riot, and Wakeful, sniffing the air and trotting out expectantly, well knowing the good time that, with luck, lies in store for them that day, there comes over me a feeling of sadness, and 'age laments life's vigour spent.'"

THE EDITOR.

SEVENTY YEARS A MASTER.

A HUNTSMAN'S REMINISCENCES.

Chapter I.

EARLY MEMORIES.

I WAS born at Stratton Lodge, Biggleswade, on November 23rd, 1818. I was educated at the Rev. John Fell's School at Huntingdon, and after they had made "a very smart youth" of me there, I was drafted back home, and there soon found plenty to occupy my time—in sport. I cannot remember when I was not mixed up with horses and hounds, and I think my father must have put me across a pony before I could properly walk.

I saw Mr. Charles Barnett find his first cub with the Cambridgeshire Hounds, in the year 1829, and as a youngster I had many a good run with them in the years that followed,

until I saw that fine old sportsman kill his last fox in his final season, thirty-eight years later.

My father, John Race,—better known to many hunting people through the pages of the *Sporting Magazine* as "Thistle Whipper"—always kept a few hounds. At first his "pack" consisted of a 26-inch bloodhound, and a beagle which could trot under the bloodhound with her stern up. But they had fine noses, and some rare good sport he had with them. Then he improved them by introducing three couples of blue-mottled hounds, and so, by buying a few and by careful breeding, he eventually got together a useful pack.

The Biggleswade Harriers were started in the year 1811, Lord Ongley, of Old Warden Park, being the first in command. Then he handed them over to Mr. Wells, who was succeeded by Mr. Charles Barnett, of Stratton Park. That gentleman, however, only kept them one season, giving them up on account of taking over the Cambridgeshire Fox-hounds, and he passed them on to my father. I

was then a lad of eleven years, but I fancied that I already knew something about horses and hounds and hunting. Probably my father thought so too; at any rate, I whipped-in for him from that year, being perhaps one of the youngest Whips in the kingdom.

In the course of time—to be exact, in the year 1840—my father handed the horn to me, and from that day I set to work to build up a pack that I should be proud of. And the sport they have given me, and so many of my neighbours also, leaves nothing to regret concerning the trouble I have taken in making the pack what it is to-day. "Trouble" I have said, but any Master who has built up a pack, and who has enjoyed the delight of watching its development, and of noting the splendid work and clever achievements of the leaders—such hounds, for instance, as old Hasty, and Wakeful, and Cowslip, beautiful creatures, who were as intelligent and responsive as any human being could possibly be—the building up of such a pack cannot be spoken of as "trouble." It has

been my life's great hobby, and it has indeed been to me a work of love. Yes, that is no exaggeration. Every hound in that pack, I verily believe, loved me, as I loved them.

My father saw a great deal of sport with them, and he and his old friend, Mr. Wells, rode to them in many a good gallop. Speaking of Mr. Wells reminds me of a tale my father used to tell. One day they were out together, looking for a hare as usual, and my father found her. "Tantara!" he called, for he was a stickler for the old-fashioned etiquette of the field, and "Tally-ho!" was rarely heard in those days.

N——, Mr. Wells' whipper-in, was one of those clever people who think they know everything. Really he knew very little, but he was never too modest to ask. He rode up.

"What was that you called, sir?" he asked.

"Tantrebowbus, Tantrebowbus, my lad," was the answer he got from the governor.

"Well, should I always call that when I see a hare?"

"Why, certainly, certainly," said my father, laughing in his sleeve.

Away they went, over a nice hunting country, until they came to a place called Eyeworth. Mr. Wells and the governor were one side of a thick hedge, N—— on the other. The hare came out of the hedge on his side, and old N—— yelled, "Tantrebowbus! Tantrebowbus!" until you could have heard him at Topler's Hill.

"What's that the fool is shouting?" asked his master.

"Lord only knows for certain. But I think he's calling you bad names," replied the governor.

If there was one thing that my father liked more than another it was to hunt a deer. He hunted a great number of out-lying fallow deer, and many a turned-out one also. He was once presented with a fine red deer, by a few of his friends, and on more than one occasion that deer looked like leading him

into breaking his neck. He used to keep him on a long chain, and whenever he felt that he would like a hunt he would let him loose.

One day he took him along the Biggleswade to Baldock turnpike, and turned him out at a likely-looking spot, waiting his accustomed ten minutes before laying them on. But there was no hunt for him that day. Instead, he was soon mixed up in an exciting little adventure, which provided him with fun sufficient to compensate for the loss of his run, and the subject of a yarn which, in after years, he was never tired of telling.

Near this main turnpike there is one of the prettiest and most secluded country byways to be found in these counties, a long grassy lane, shaded on either side by tall hedges of hawthorn, carpeted with a thick, soft, turf which gives an ideal place for an early morning gallop. But this fair Arcadia is known to the gipsy tribe who rove this country for miles around, and it is ten to one that in those days no matter when you went there, you would find a gipsy tent or

two, a fire of hedge-sticks over which there was boiling a savoury stew, and a tribe of Romany youngsters.

Well, as it happened, my father's deer took it into his head to go that way, and he had only carelessly loped over three or four fields, taking the hedgerows with graceful ease, when he landed slap in the middle of a gipsy camp. Then the music started! My father could hear the rumpus from where he sat on his old chestnut, across the fields, on the turnpike and at once guessing the mischief there might be brewing, and fearing more, no doubt, that some harm would come to his pet deer than that damage might occur to the gipsies, he "View-holloa'd," took the intervening hedges and fields in much less time than the deer had occupied in the journey, and rode full pelt into the encampment.

As he feared, there was the great red deer floundering about in a gipsy tent, the women and children were screaming and rushing about in all directions, and an old man who had been lying asleep in the tent when he was

so rudely awakened by this most unexpected of visitors, was filling the air with a wealth of curses, in the knowledge of which nobody could hope to rival a gipsy.

To make matters worse, there was also a babe lying peacefully asleep in that tent at the time of the red deer's intrusion, and the poor mother was wildly rushing from tent to caravan, utterly distracted. But it seems that the babe was not the cause of the old man's anxiety and noisy wrath. His favourite fiddle also lay under the tent, and the deer, now lumbering about in a clumsy and terrified bewilderment, had got one cloof entangled in the strings, with what result to the fiddle may best be imagined.

While the grey-haired gipsy cursed, the deer kicked and struggled, smashing the fiddle to smithereens, but, strangely enough, never once touching the baby. My father said that the row awoke the infant, but that, instead of adding its lusty screams and wailing to the general uproar, it lay there among the wreckage, laughing up at the great red deer, and

taking it all as a capital good show got up for its special amusement. I am glad to say that no harm came to that gipsy babe.

At last the deer shook himself free from the rags of the wrecked tent, kicked the last remnants of the old man's fiddle from his cloof, and bounding out, for the first time became aware of the distracted mother. With a shake of his head he was after her, and she ran for her life to the caravan. Of course the deer won, and put his forelegs over her shoulders just as she was scrambling, half dead with fright, up the steps of the caravan.

The governor succeeded at last in getting him away before any further damage was done, and as neither the mother nor child was hurt, and a sovereign stopped the gipsy's lamentations on the subject of his favourite fiddle, here was another case of "All's well that ends well."

But after that day, no matter where that deer was, nor how near the hounds were to him, if ever he got sight of a woman he would always make straight for her, and would

always jump on her if he caught her. My father had to get rid of him at last because he became a little too much of a nuisance in that way.

To but mention the word "deer" was enough to make my father's hair stand up. One day he was informed of a deer in a field not very far from the Kennels. Early one morning (about seven o'clock in the winter months) they came and called him. Out of bed he jumped, dressed in all haste, fetched the hounds, and off he went, with no whipper-in, or anyone else to assist him.

There was a good scent, and they soon picked it up. After they had been running about half an hour, he was joined in the chase by a neighbouring farmer, but this addition to the Field was made in rather an abrupt and amusing manner.

The farmer, coming round a corner as hard as he could pelt on a good stiff cob, ran full tilt into the governor, with such force and complete success that he knocked him clean

out of the saddle and flat on his back by the roadside.

"Well sir, and what the ——— did you mean by that?" the governor began, picking himself up in a towering rage, and making for the farmer as if he meant to pull him also out of his saddle.

The innocent cause of the old gentleman's wrath sat speechless on his horse, as much surprised at the encounter as my father. Then his face grew as red as a beet as he tried hard to stifle his laughter, but in which attempt at last he failed completely. Nor could he manage to splutter out an apology. But my father always had a keen sense of humour closely underlying his bluster, and soon the pair of them had shaken hands and were guffawing loudly over this unconventional early morning meeting and introduction.

Time was being lost, however, as my father suddenly realised with a shock, and judging that the adventure must have already robbed him of something like five valuable minutes from the chase, he jumped on his chestnut

and was off again, shouting back to the farmer that he was after a deer, and inviting him to follow. And while they rode as hard as their horses could carry, they found out that they were both of them very good fellows, and a firm friendship was started which lasted for many years afterwards. Soon their quarry was viewed, and these two alone enjoyed a splendid run, and they stuck to it until at last they took him.

"Thistle Whipper" was always fond of a horse deal, and he used to take me as a lad to a great many horse fairs. He was admitted to be one of the best judges of a horse in this or the adjoining counties, and I must admit that I have inherited his love of a "deal." He was one of the few men who could hold his own with the horse-dealers, who very rarely got the better of him. I flatter myself that I, also, have known a good horse when I have seen him, during my long hunting career; at any rate nobody could have had a better instructor. More than eighty years ago my father cut the following out of a magazine,

and told me "to paste it in my hat." It is a description of a horse-dealer, and conveys some good advice:

"A horse-dealer is a double dealer, for he dealeth more in double-dealings than your punster. When he giveth his word, it signifieth little, howbeit it standeth for two significations. He putteth his promises, like his colts, in 'a break.' Over his mouth, truth, like the turnpike-man, writeth up 'No trust.' Wherever he speaketh, his 'spoke' hath more than the forewheel. He telleth lies, not only white, or black, but likewise grey, bay, chestnut-brown, cream and roan, piebald and skewbald. He sweareth as many oaths out of court as any man, and more in, for he will swear two ways about a horse's 'dam.' If, by grace, he be something honest, it is only a dapple; for he can be 'fair and unfair' at once. He hath much imagination, for he selleth a complete set of capital harness, of which there be 'no traces.' A nag, proper only for dogs' meat, he writeth down, but crieth up 'fit to go to any hounds'; or, as may be, 'would suit a timid gentleman.' Stringhalt he calleth 'grand action,' and kicking 'lifting the feet well up.' If a mare have the farcical disease, he nameth her out of comedy, and selleth Blackbird for a 'racer' because he hath 'a running thrush.' Horses that drink only water he justly warranteth to be 'temperate,' and if dead lame, declareth them 'good in all their paces,' seeing that they can go but one. Roaring he calleth 'sound,' and a steed that high-bloweth in running, he compareth to Eclipse, for he 'outstrippeth the wind.' Another might be entered at a steeplechase—for why?

he is 'as fast as a church.' Thorough-pin with him, is synonymous with 'perfect leg.' If a nag cougheth, ''tis a clever hack.' If his knees be fractured, he is 'well broke' for gig or saddle. If he reareth, he is 'sixteen hands high.' If he hath drawn a tierce in a cart, he is 'a fencer.' If he biteth, he 'shows good courage' and he is playful merely, though he should 'play the devil.' If he runneth away, he calleth him 'quick at starting,' and has been used to 'carry a lady." If a cob stumbleth, he considers him a 'true goer,' and addeth, 'the proprietor parteth from him to go abroad."

A friend of mine who was once "had," might have saved his money, perhaps, if he had thoroughly digested the foregoing information concerning horse-dealers. He bought a mare from an Irish dealer, who warranted her "sound in wind and limb, and without a fault." But after she was sent home he found that the sight of one eye was quite gone. Naturally he waited upon the dealer, and requested that she might be taken back and the purchase money returned.

"You warranted her without a fault," he said.

"Ah, sure, and I did sir," replied Paddy, "But blindness is not the poor creature's fault. No sir. That's only her misfortune."

A HUNTING TOAST.

Come fill up a bumper—a full one to grace,
The toast of toasts boys—"The joys of the Chase!"
We've the ev'ning before us, the praises to sound,
Of all that delights us of horse and of hound.
Dull care comes not near us, to mar the delight,
That the sport of the day should secure for the night;
So as life is uncertain, we send round the bowl,
And be reason our guide 'mid the flow of the soul.

To the bard 'twere no difficult matter to trace
A resemblance betwixt human life and the Chase;
In youth we "throw off" as we "draw up the wind,"
Love or hope will break covert, and furnish the find.
If love meets with crosses, or hope with a wreck,
Life's chase like the fox-chase, but meets with a "check;"
And as nought that is perfect exists 'neath the sun,
A check may occur in the very best run.

Some comrade perchance when the last of one's seen,
Will give the "Who-whoop" to "the old man in green,"
And the cry of my hounds, like a silvery wave,
I shall hear in sweet chorus, and turn in my grave.
So let us be "nowhere," or let us be first,
Grim death will be found at the end of a "burst;"
And in truth be it slow or quick be the pace,
Death but giveth a zest to the joys of the Chase.

Sportsman Magazine, 1833.

Chapter II.

THE COACHING DAYS.

REFERRING to "Thistle Whipper's" love of a horse deal, and the journeys he used to take me to various noted horse fairs in the country, brings many recollections to my mind of those old-fashioned coaching days. The "Good old Days" I have often heard them called, and in spite of what many a modern demagogue says about life's improvements in these days, I think there is much we have lost from that old life which we can honestly regret. I am not going to touch upon politics, because everybody about here knows me as a "Good old Tory"; but for many other reasons I often wish that some of the characteristics which marked our forefathers in those stirring days—when men *were* men—were to be more frequently met with now.

But I was speaking of our journeys in search of good horses, and of the long rides which taxed the physical powers and endurance of the strongest, but which we then took as quite a matter of course. Those were the days before the swift and comfortable railway travelling to which the present generation is accustomed, when the journey had to be done on horseback or by coach, and on the latter, no matter how cold or stormy the weather, we should have scorned to ride inside.

At that time the Great North Road was a busy highway indeed, when the rattle of one coach and the merry sound of the coach-guard's horn had scarcely died away ere you saw the approach of another; and, in passing, I might here mention that my native town of Biggleswade, during that period of coaching activity, waxed comfortably fat and prosperous upon the continuous stream of travellers passing through on their way up or down the country. There were some large stables of coach horses kept at Biggleswade when I was a lad; notably, I remember when the "Rose,"

the "Swan," the "Crown," and the "Oak" used to be the recognised coaching houses. At the last-named there were at one time fifty horses stalled, and about twenty-five to thirty at the "Rose."

But it must by no means be thought that the coaches, as a method of (as we then thought) speedy locomotion, were to be despised. Many of the crack whips on the road would take their teams along at a spanking average rate of from eleven to twelve miles an hour, and some of the best-known coaches were so prompt in their arrival and departure that the country people used to set their clocks by them. It was a rare sight, I can tell you, and one to make a healthy youngster's pulses bound, to see old Tom Crouch put his team in the London and Lincoln Mail along the London Road, tooling them through the town at twelve to thirteen miles an hour, and bringing them up at the "Rose" with the touch of an artist, every horse of them on a level.

Tom Crouch was one of the best whips on the Great North Road, and he and his guard,

Sam Price, were regarded at every coaching house between London and Lincoln as belonging to the "tip-toppers" or aristocrats of the coaching world. Sam was wonderfully accomplished in the use of the coach horn; he always used to play "Rory O'More" or a "Tantivy" as he came into Biggleswade, and every time he came in you would see a good round score of his admirers among the townspeople turn out to give him a hearty greeting.

The Rockingham was another splendidly horsed coach on this road, and others were, the London and Boston Mail, the Hennesey (a privately-horsed coach run by a syndicate), the London and Stamford, the Magnet, the High Flyer, and many others. Of the drivers, George Cartwright was another famous whip, a character known to everybody right up and down the road, and who I can see now as though it were but yesterday, his great round, rubicund, jolly face beaming down at us youngsters with the graciousness and warmth of the rising sun.

Each coach could carry sixteen passengers, besides the driver and guard, four inside (always ladies or invalids), and twelve up aloft. I can recall the time when twenty-five coaches regularly passed through Biggleswade every day, to say nothing of post-chaises and other private equipages.

I am reminded that poor old Tom Crouch came to a sad and violent end close to Biggleswade. There were the up and down Lincoln Mails, and they usually passed somewhere near Lower Caldecote, between Biggleswade and Sandy, and these Mails ran so regularly to time that it was rare indeed that they passed beyond a mile from that hamlet. There was a good deal of rivalry among the drivers and guards of the various coaches, and many of the catastrophies which occurred could be directly attributed to recklessness in racing or other ways. When an accident happened after a proved case of racing the drivers and guards were generally committed to the Assizes if they got off clear of a broken neck, and if they were shown to be guilty,

heavy sentences were passed upon them. Yes those were the days when "justice" was not ladled out gently with a silver teaspoon.

Sometimes it happened that there was rivalry and jealousy between the drivers and guards of the up and down coaches running on the same mails contract, and, if my memory serves me correctly, that was the case with the up and down London to Lincoln Mails. Well, they met one day, as usual both of them quite up to their scheduled time, and they would have passed at their accustomed place if all had been well. Our famous whip, Tom, was driving the up mail that day, and the driver of the down coach saw him coming along at a terrific pace, galloping his team for all they could do, right up the middle of the road. It was said by witnesses that the driver of the down mail pulled his team out on to the grass by the roadside, as far as he possibly could, in order to avoid the collision which seemed almost inevitable. And it came! The hubs of the front wheels caught, there was a dreadful smash, poor old Tom was shot off his

box and pitched on his head. His neck was broken, and he died immediately.

Tom Crouch had a brother who was scarcely less famous as a driver on the Great North Road—George Crouch, who also had like to have broken his neck through too stylishly bringing his team up one day outside the "Peacock" at Islington. George was bringing them up in his most dashing manner, to the merry toot-tootle of the coachguard's horn, when he got his wheels into the gutter, and over she went. George was sent flying off his box, clean through the door of a cottage, but when he picked himself up he still had a firm and professionally correct hold of the ribbons.

"Was there cruelty to the coach horses?" you may ask me. Yes, I am afraid that too frequently there was, for that was in the infant days of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and the coaches had to keep up to their scheduled time, no matter what happened, or what the state of weather or roads. I have seen them

brought up outside one of the coaching houses in Biggleswade when all four of them have been blowing as though their hearts would break, the sweat literally pouring from them. True, the stages were comparatively short, but some of the drivers were devils untied.

And, as you might expect, the worst horses in the stables were always brought out for the night runs. Here I may mention a fact that will perhaps still be remembered by others who lived in this district in the coaching days. "Doctor" Fisher, who lived on the Market Square, Biggleswade, sixty years ago, and who was a very clever vet., grew so accustomed to the running of the coach horses that he could tell, while lying in bed, if one of a team was lame. Often he would wake up his wife as a coach was rattling past in the night, with the remark: "Listen! That off-leader is lame," or "It's cruel to be running that near-leader (or wheeler, as the case might be) to-night."

The railways have, of course, killed all that prosperity which was brought by the

coaches, and it is not at all to be wondered at that the arrival of the iron horse was regarded with a great deal of suspicion and aversion. Many of those to whom the coaching trade was a matter of vital importance feared, and only too truly, that the railways for them meant blue ruin. I can well recall the days when the decline of the coaching trade began to be seriously felt. But there were many of the old drivers who would not believe that coaching was doomed. You must know that at first there was a vast amount of prejudice against the railways, and those who loved horses were not sparing in their abuse of the "nasty, smoky, stinking things," as trains were then called. (Yes, and much worse descriptions than that were common enough.) It is amusing to now look back on the days when the trains first began to run, and to recall that the men at work in the fields on either side of the railway would leave their tasks and run to see the train go by, shouting "Here comes the ——— old screamer."

Some of the old coachmen and guards used to smile, and prophesy that the day would soon come when the people would get tired of these "new fangled ways of getting about," and would then return to the coaches. But the coaches have gone, and with them went much of the prosperity of my native town, and of many another lying alongside our great highways of traffic. Perhaps it will be thought that I, also, am prejudiced against the railways. I am not, but I frankly admit that I was, as greatly as anybody. I have had cause to grumble about them, also, for some of my best hounds have, by them, come to a horrible death. Notably, that disaster may be recalled near Stratford signal-box, between Biggleswade and Sandy, when three couples of my most valued hounds were killed, a misfortune which cut me very deeply. From time to time since then the pack has suffered heavy loss on the railways.

May I here tell you the local legend about "Shock Oliver," that noted highwayman of the Great North Road? Old Doctor McGrath,

who resided at Biggleswade, was once called out near midnight, to attend a patient lying seriously ill at Sandy. The doctor was one of the right sort, beloved by all classes, and ready at any time to go anywhere that duty called him. He turned out without delay, but on the road, near Beeston, "Shock Oliver" stopped him. There was no fear about Doctor McGrath. He recognised the famous highwayman, told him frankly and simply that he had absolutely nothing of value about him, and further, that the interruption was dangerously delaying him, for he was on an errand of life or death.

"Is that so?" said "Shock Oliver," pocketing his pistol. "Then I would be the last to delay ye. But a little farther along this road you will probably be stopped by two others. Give 'em my name, sir, and I'll guarantee that they'll pass you."

The doctor met the others, near Girtford Bridge, and was stopped by them, as "Shock Oliver" had said. But the guarantee of safety held good, and he was in no way molested.

I am straying, I know, from hunting reminiscences, but I hope my friends who read these pages will humour the old man who is telling this story, and allow him to get into the stride of it in his own way. I was telling of a visit to Beverley horse fair with my father, and I well recall the rigours of that long, cold, and weary coach journey to Yorkshire. We arrived in due time, having accomplished the journey in a night and day, but so cold and stiff that we could scarcely climb down off the coach. But then there was the compensation of thawing out in a crowd of others before a roaring fire, and the very comforting reflection for me that, though but a youngster, I was a seasoned traveller like the rest, and I certainly think that I bore the long journey with much less grumbling than some of them.

After dinner we adjourned to a great hall, with a huge fire burning, and the scene comes back to me clearly, as I sat there with my father, with lots of others, strangers, seated all around. And then the governor began

telling tales—and a rare good one he was at that—with a rich fund of yarns that would keep you listening all the night. I can see them now, with the firelight playing on their faces, intent upon the old gentleman's stories, and he working himself up to concert pitch until he had them all spell-bound. Then the gin-toddy, hot brandy, and warmth from the blazing fire began to tell, first on one and then upon another, and heads here and there began to bob. One old chap fell fast asleep, and his hand slipped off the high arm of his chair, and his fingers fell into a glass of hot spirits which the waiter had just placed on a table close by; he jumped up with a yell, nearly knocking my father out of his chair, awaking everybody else, and abruptly bringing the story-telling to an end.

Not until then did I realise that the governor had been scowling darkly and very angrily at me. He ordered me to bed, and following me to my chamber, angrily demanded why, for the last half-hour, I had been making such a ——— fool of myself by laughing. I

could not help it; carried away with the enjoyment of yarning to such a large company of good listeners, from time to time he had been wiping his nose on his night-cap, which, on packing up hurriedly when we were called for the coach, he had stuffed into his coat pocket.

Next morning, when I came down to breakfast, I found that my father had been up and about for some time, and that he had breakfasted well, and already was bent on business. I hurried through the meal and followed him out. In the hall I discovered that somebody had taken my hat, and in its place had left me nearly a new one.

"George, my boy," said I, "this will do."

Putting the good exchange on, I sauntered out into the fair. I found the governor in all the warmth and enjoyment of a real, old-fashioned horse deal, and soon I was as thick in it as he was, and as keenly critical of the points of the horse before us; then I suddenly spotted my old hat coming through the crowd, and for me the pleasure of that horse deal

vanished. Dodging into the drove of horses, I called out to the governor, who had stopped in his dealing, and looked as though he wondered what on earth had betaken me.

"Look out!" said I. "Somebody swapped me for a new hat this morning, and here comes my old one. I'm off."

With all speed I made my way through the fair, back to the hotel, and up to a little dark smoking-room overlooking the street. I could not see my enemy, and at length ventured down again. To my horror, there stood the stranger in the doorway.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said he, "but I think you have got my hat, and I have yours."

"I am sorry indeed to say, sir," I replied, "that I believe you have spoken the truth."

Chapter III.

HARE HUNTING.

I THINK, after all these years, I ought to regard the hare as one of my best friends, for has it not been "puss" who has provided me with so many good runs, and sent such a number of my good friends and neighbours to their homes after a fine day's sport, singing the praises of George Race and his pack—a pack that has brought him credit? Well, then, you will forgive me for entertaining a great regard for her. "The hare, gentlemen!"

I know that many people are under the impression that hare hunting is but a trifling sport. Perhaps, had they seen the runs I have had with hares, they might have cause to alter their opinions.

But no pack of harriers can have sport if the tactics are followed that I have too often

witnessed. I have seen a Huntsman wait for fifteen minutes after they had put her up, before he would lay them on. Then again, I have seen a Huntsman stand still and let her come right round on her own foil. Surely that is not the way to set to work to make a good run!

My opinion is that the way to have sport is to "make it." Drive your hare out of her own country, ride her several fields, and in seven cases out of ten "she's off!" But for all that, you must be blessed with that little addition without which no hounds can have sport—luck. If you are to have a good run you must, at some part of it, have a considerable amount of luck. First of all you must find a nice, straight-necked animal, then you must have a good scent, and, thirdly, you must have the good luck to go over a line of country where she is not headed here, there, and everywhere. Yes, luck plays a prominent part in the history of the Chase. And now, may I tell you something about two of the best runs which I think I ever had with my hounds after hares?

One morning we found a hare close to Eyeworth, and a splendid run she gave us. Crossing the Eyeworth and Wrestlingworth road, she turned to the left up to Dunton, and then over the road and down the hill to Dunton brook. Here she turned up to Eyeworth Spinneys, up the hill, and crossed the Eyeworth and Dunton road again, straight on down the fields and up to Sutton Hill. There she bore away to the right, leaving Potton Wood on her right, and then down to Gamlingay windmill, where she crossed the Gamlingay and Potton road, and over the brook (there was no railway there in the days I am referring to), straight on to Gamlingay Heath Plantation. Right up this, over the Heath road, leaving White Wood on her right, and on over Everton Park. Still racing, they drove her down the hill and over the Bottoms, down to Waterloo Farm, where they checked.

There was a dog chained up at the farm, and no doubt she heard him, and this turned her more to the right. However, they soon

righted themselves, and merrily on they went, over the Everton and Tempsford road, and getting a view of her soon after crossing that road, they raced up to her and pulled her down, close to where now stands the Tempsford Railway Station.

I make that just short of an eight-mile point.

The other run was, I think, even better. We found her in Litlington field, and she went straight up to Morden Heath. There was a wood sale proceeding there, or no doubt she would have gone in; this turned her to the left, and they ran very nicely down to the bottom end of Royston Heath, up to Royston town, where she turned back along the Heath, on the lower ground. She wanted to come back over the road, but a wagon here, a gig there, and an old woman helped to turn puss up the hill again to Thornell's Gorse. Right through this they raced her, and out into the open again up to Reed village, where they checked in a grass field.

Two men out with their guns called to me, "She's gone through those rails at the bottom of the field."

I took them there, but there was no line. "Turn 'em, Bill," I shouted; "this is all a —— lie! It's to the left."

I held them to the left and away they went again, leaving Reed village on the right, and on over a nice country down to the London and Royston road.

We had a Puckeridge man out with us that day, and he kept "having a cut" at me. I thought "No, thank you! You don't go by me if this chestnut holds out." All up one long ploughed field he raced me, and then getting alongside, he tried to get into the furrow before me. I kept him on the land, but by the time I got to the top of that field I found that my horse was getting a little the worse for wear. Turning to Bill Pope I said: "You have a go at him now, Bill. We shall stop him directly."

Bill took him on at once, and raced him right down the next field. But he was "a game un," and he kept us both busy.

Let us go on with the chase. The hounds were running beautifully, heads breast high, like a flock of pigeons—a pretty picture that warms the heart of any huntsman and sets his blood coursing. Puss ran the London and Royston road for a short distance, until she came to a roadman who was stoning the highway. He turned her off to the left, and they went on over several big fields. Then I heard old Bill sing out, "Tally-ho! Yonder she goes, over the hill."

Still carrying a good head, and never once giving us a chance for a "breather," they ran up to Capon's Wood, and I thought "It's all over now. We shall be certain to have a fresh one up here." However, with such a chorus as you never heard, into the cover they went, up a rackway for about a hundred yards, and there they bowled her over.

On our way back that afternoon we met a man who had lived in that country all his life —Charles Cauthley—and I told him exactly the country we had covered.

"Now Charles," said I, "how far have we run her?"

He thought for a minute, then "You must have run her at least twelve miles, sir," he answered.

I have always thought that was about my best run with a hare. How can I describe those runs so minutely to-day, though it is many a year since I enjoyed them? I will let you into a secret. Throughout the whole of my long hunting career I have carefully kept a diary, wherein each night I have entered up the day's sport. Thus I have a record of every hare, and fox, and deer that I have hunted, and I know exactly where we found, the country we ran over, and where we killed if the luck was ours. Many a time, of course, they beat me, but never have I lain my head on the pillow until I had satisfied myself how I had made the mistake, and where she had gone to.

As I have before mentioned, if you are to have good sport, first you must have "luck." But then there is a right way and a wrong

way of doing things. I think, out of the whole country I have hunted, I saw more sport from Morden than any other place. And I always put that down to the help I had from those good friends of mine, the Morden farmers. I should not be just if I did not pay the greatest tribute in my power to John Westrope, Jim Sale, and poor old Johnson. Never were there three better men ever went into the hunting field than they were. They all knew just what to do and just where to go, and many and many a run they made for me. The right place and one crack of the whip very often makes a great run, and so it was with those farmers. They knew where to go to make a run.

John Westrope always remembers one day out with me. We had had a good ring and they were pretty handy to her, when I called out, "Go on John! She'll come short back under that other hedge and she'll run her foil and beat me. Go on!"

Away he went, but at about three miles an hour. "D——n it all," I shouted to him,

"Go on! She'll beat you!" And so she did. He was just about half a minute too late. However, I did manage to get hold of her, and so I forgave him. But so often it is just that half minute that does it.

A Master has much to try his temper, and there are so many temptations to him to "let out" at the Field. I am afraid that I have been one of the greatest sinners in that respect, but I am glad to say that there was not one who ever went out with me who did not forgive the old man at once, and not only did they forgive, but they also forgot. But one day I must have been exceptionally cross, and everybody around me was having a little "damson tart." John Westrope must have had a little more than his share. Puss beat me that day, and coming back up the road I turned to him.

"Well, she's beat me, John," I said, "but where do you think she has gone to?"

"Gone to H——! I should think," he ripped out. But that is the only time I ever knew old John to get angry.

The hare is in some cases a very difficult animal to hunt. If you are not pretty close to her she will sometimes run a furrow the whole length of a field, turn short round, and then come back on her own foil and go out of that field the same end she went in. But I always say, and always did, "cast for a run." If they had been running smartish for a while and threw up, I took hold of them and cast 'em forrard. "Hold them on." If the quarry is on, you lose no time, and if it is back behind you, well, then you have the satisfaction of knowing that you have lost nothing by swinging them forward, and you can console yourself with the reflection that the animal you are hunting is a ringing brute.

I believe scent depends a lot on the animal you find. How often you hear people say, "Why, they could run this morning, but they can't run a bit this afternoon"; or, "They could not run this morning." Find in the afternoon, and they run like blazes.

I will give you one instance that I recollect very well. We met at Morden, and it blew as

hard as ever you knew in your life. We found a hare, and they certainly did not run her three fields ; we found several more and did nothing with them. Somebody had seen a hare when we were running, lying back about two miles, and the Field said "Oh, let's go and put her up."

I asked, "What is the use ? You see they can't run a yard, and you are taking me back two or three miles out of my way."

But nothing would satisfy them, so I gave way. "Well, come along," said I, "we'll go and put her up." But I noticed that as we went back the day got worse. We had not gone far before we put one up, but as soon as they broke view there was an end to it. They could not own it one single yard.

"There," I said, "now are you satisfied ?"

"Oh no ! Let us go and put her up. It's only a few fields on now."

So on we went again, got to the field, and put her up. Away they went and for close on forty minutes they ran her as if they were glued to her, never checking once, until they ran bang into her.

On several other occasions I have noticed the same thing, and I maintain that scent has a great deal to do with the animal you find. Is it not natural?

Another good run we had is worth a word or two. We found her on a piece of ploughed land close to Morden osier beds, and she came straight away by Mobbs' Hole, along the bottom of Brown's farm, and then turned over the brook and right up Dunton bottoms, up to Dunton cross roads. Over the road she went, half-way between the Cross road and Mrs. Kendall's house. Still on, over Stratton Farm, and up into the Great North Road, by Mr. Charles Lindsell's plantation, which she left half a field on her right, and on to Holme Green, by the back of Mr. Lindsell's farm, towards the Great Northern Railway. There she turned to the left, ran alongside the railway to Langford Siding, then on to the railway and down it a short distance, turned out to the right and bearing for Henlow Park, went over the river and up to Henlow Church, where they killed her.

That run was over a good ten or twelve miles of country, and quite an eight-mile point.

On another occasion, December 24th, 1887, we had a capital hunt. We found on Sunderland Farm, on the Sutton side, and she came first nearly to the Brickyard bottom of Hitchmead road. Then she turned short back to where she had come from, over on to the Sutton estate, and we then came back nearly in view with her to the meadows. Over Latton lane, down Jefferies' rush meadows, and across to Lower Sunderland Farm, over the pastures. Turned short, over the brook, on to the Turnpike farm, down this, crossed the Potton and Biggleswade road, and she then ran the grass fields close on to the Biggleswade Common.

There she turned to the right, between Miller's Fen and the Warren Farm, over the road and up to Deepdale, over the London and North Western Railway up to Potton Cemetery, where she crossed the Potton and Sandy road, and, still hunting nicely, they

went right across Everton open fields up to the village. Here she turned sharp to the left, ran a little way along the road, into Hasells Park, and crossing this she went down to the lower side of the Brickyard north of Sandy Great Northern railway station. Over this, and nearly up to the London and North Western line, where we had a long check.

We "hit it" again eventually, and ran her over several fields, but we could do nothing more with her, as we had lost so much time crossing the railways.

That run was about two hours from start to finish, and there was no possible chance of changing, because in that country, in those days, hares were as scarce as white elephants.

There is great diversity of opinion among huntsmen as to whether harriers should hunt foxes and deer. I have my own views on that subject, and I hold them strongly, a long life having convinced me that they are not far wide of the mark. My opinion is that it does not hurt them a bit, and time and again I

have proved it. Some people hold exactly the opposite view.

I remember an article in the *Sportsman Magazine* many years ago, written by a Mr. Beckford. I have kept it all these years, cherishing for a long time the hope that I might one day meet the writer and have the pleasure of a few words with him, for I don't think that he knew much about harriers. But as I desire to be quite fair to the other side, I will quote you what this gentleman said. In his opinion—

> "Harriers must be kept to their own game. Hounds cannot be perfect unless used to one scent, and one style of hunting. To run a fox with them teaches them to skirt, and is of great disservice to them. The high scent which a fox leaves, the straightness of his courage, the straightness of his course, the eagerness of his pursuit and the 'halloing' that accompanies it, all contribute to spoil harriers."

Did ever man read such rot? I suppose what some people require, and what they would call "hare hunting," is to keep her in the same field as much as possible, and let her run her own foil as many times as possible;

then they are likely to have "good sport," because hounds run over foiled ground as well again as they do over a nice bit of stubble or grass.

I must apologise for speaking bluntly and plainly on this subject, but how any man in his right senses can carry out the methods of some so-called harrier men, is beyond me. If they are right, then how wrong I have been all these years, and how much better sport I might have had!

But will you forgive an old man's vanity if I claim for my hounds that they have shown as much sport, if not more than any other pack of harriers in England? Perhaps this has been due to various elements combined, a good pack of hounds (and sometimes, at least, I took them in the right place), and a few real good men, who knew what to do and where to go. All these things helped sport, and I might have shown Mr. Beckford, had he afforded us the pleasure of his society, that our hares were capable of making a straight three, four, or five-mile point, and that usually

those who came out with us had no chance to sit down and take a nap while hounds turned the leaves over to assure us that she had gone on. I am sorry that I cannot agree with our dear friend about spoiling harriers by hunting other species, but all I can say is that "it's all —— rot."

On turning over in my mind the best all-round day I ever had with the hare, I pause on the date of February 17th, 1885. That brings a thrilling memory of glorious sport, and I know that there are still a few left alive who were out with us that day; amongst others, there was a Mr. Tunnard, of Boston, who was riding a big thorough-bred bay horse.

We met at Dunton cross-roads, and those who know the country will be able to confirm my opinion that it was, without doubt, a day that will want a lot of beating. We found our first hare on Kidman's farm, next to Middlesex, and ran her very nicely over Newton farm. She left Dunton Fen on her right, went over the brook off Sunderland Lower Farm, along the grasses, over Latton

lane and down the rush meadows a bit, and then on to Jefferies' across the grass meadows to the Potton road, and then turned short to the left, coming back over the Turnpike Farm, on to the pastures, over the top Sunderland Farm, and down close to the reed-bed, where they checked.

A "holloa" right forward on the Stratton Farm put matters right, but they could only hunt her back to the field we found her in, and then on to Dunton Fen, where she beat us—a very nice ring.

We then found another, in the same field as the last, and she came right away over the grass fields to the cross-roads, then over Mrs. Kendall's fields to Kidman's farm north of Millow village. Up to the Millow plantation, over the road at that point, and down the hill close under the plantation; after going nearly the full length of it she then turned short to the left, over the bottoms, and came into the Dunton Lodge road at the bottom of the hill below Dunton Lodge Farm. There she turned

up the road to Mobbs' Hole, over the road and nearly down to Eyeworth Gorse.

From that point we failed to do any more good, as the body went back this side of the river with a fresh hare, and we did not stop them before they got to Mobbs' Hole. But a couple and a half went on with the hunted hare, across Carter's farm, over the river by Hook's mill, and up the hill. Unfortunately I had to go round to get over the river, and, "throwing up" on the hill, they heard Charles, my Whipper-in, bringing the body on, and they went back to him, so that there was an end to a very fine hunt.

We then went back to Eyeworth with the intention of coming home, but the Field wanted me to find another. So I said "Come along then," and we soon found on Gabriel Smith's farm at Eyeworth. She went down to the Havannah meadows, turned to the left and up the boundary fence between Kidman's and Middlesex farms, where she turned again short, left-handed up Middlesex nearly to the Dunton road, and left-handed again over

Smith's farm, where she turned to the right and came over the road by Eyeworth Church. Then right down the grasses to the bottom of the hill, down the plantation, through the gate, on to John Mayne's, right over his farm and down to Carter's farm at Hook's mill. Turning there a bit to the left, she ran the Wrestlingworth and Morden road, up to Wrestlingworth, nearly to the top of the hill.

There I held them on a bit, and "hit it" out of the road over Mr. King's farm and down to the Cambridge road, over this, and on as if pointing for Hatley. Then to the left, up to the Wrestlingworth and Hatley road, where she dropped down, but as soon as the hounds had gone over her up she jumped, came into the Hatley road and up it for about half a mile, and then turned off the road to the left and came over Hatley field into the driftway the top of Mr. William Smith's farm. Short to the right down this, over the Hatley road, straight past Potton Wood, round the corner

and nearly down one field on the Gamlingay side, where they ran from scent to view and knocked her over.

I am quite certain that we did not change hares. The time was just three minutes under the hour, and the pace was the very best.

Writing of good runs with hares reminds me of an extraordinary coincidence I have heard my father relate, and which I have no reason to regard as untrue. Many years ago a pack of harriers, hunting the fine country in the Golden Vale, Ireland, found a hare which had a big white patch on her back, and they had, the first time they found her, a twelve-mile point without a check, and ran her up to an old castle, where she beat them. About a month afterwards they found her again in the same field, and she went straight off there again, and was lost exactly at the same place. They tried the ruins everywhere, but to no good purpose. Then they found her again in a different part of their country, and she went straight to the old castle, and there was an end to it again.

And so they decided to post a man in a place in the castle where he could command a good view. Each day he waited when the hounds were out, and within a short time they found puss again. The man heard the hounds coming, and then saw this wonderful hare coming straight for the ruins. She was a long way in front of the pack, and when she got to the old walls round the castle she ran her foil two or three times round the walls, and then turned in and jumped on a rock and sprang from one rock to another until she got to an old window, where she lay down in a great bough of ivy on the window-ledge. When the hounds came up the man told the Field what had happened and where she was, so they decided to give her some law, and they sent someone in and whipped her out. Away she went, as fresh as a daisy, and ran back to where they found her, and again she beat them. They found her yet again, but this time she ran them clean out of scent, and that was the last they saw of her.

On many occasions it has given me pleasure to pay tribute to the real, English sportsman-

like qualities of the many farmers in this district over whose land I have hunted. We have been welcomed almost without exception. But just one or two incidents on the other side of the picture come back to me, and he would be a lucky man indeed who had hunted as many years as I have without getting a little grumbling.

One day when we were in full cry across a certain farm which shall be nameless, the farmer came rushing up, stopped me, and ordered me off his land.

"But my good man," I tried to explain to him, "don't you know that I have been hunting over this land for the last forty years, and my father before me?"

He pulled me up short.

"Look you here," said he, "if you have been over this land for forty years, you have been here quite enough. Off with you!"

I could not help laughing, for he had caught me, fairly and squarely. I said "All right old chap. You've got me. I'm off!" However, we were the best of friends afterwards, and I always hunted over his farm, as of yore.

TO THE FARMERS.

I often have heard counter-jumpers complain,
(With frills big as hurdles, and heads without brain),
Whilst they're robbing the public and scraping up "blunt,"
"Oh! We think that a farmer has no right to hunt."
But shall *he* be set down by what *you* may decide?
I say he's the first that's entitled to ride.
If he brings up a colt he must break him and bit him,
Or how is a tailor or tinker to sit him?
Could you in your cleverness breed one or break him?
Try it for once, and you'll find him a dear one.
And then, if you mount him and fall in the dirt,
Mind, pitch on your head, and you'll never get hurt.

"THISTLE WHIPPER," in *Lincoln Green.*

Photo by Russell & Son. *By permission.*

MR. RACE AND HIS FAVOURITE HUNTER "LAWYER."

Chapter IV.

FOX HUNTING.

I HAD my first day's fox-hunting with the Cambridgeshire Hounds in the year 1829, and in the eighty years I have followed them I have seen many good runs, many good Masters, and many different Huntsmen handle that pack.

During the time Mr. Charles Barnett had them, and Jack Ward carried the horn, we had some excellent sport.

I whipped-in to him on several occasions, and I must here relate a very funny incident that occurred one day in Potton Wood. We were out cubbing, and we met at the bottom end of the wood at six o'clock in the morning. Putting them in, we found directly. In fact there were no end of cubs, and we ran "round and round." As soon as ever we got one

tired, up got a fresh one, and so we went on from six o'clock until ten, and no blood. At two o'clock we were still running, and the same at three, and they were nothing like killing. At last I concluded that that sort of thing would not do any longer.

The keeper was standing a little higher up the covert, his gun under his arm. I rode up to him.

"Look you here, keeper," said I, "Go down one of these rackways, and when you hear them coming up the covert with a cub, if they are nice and handy to him knock him over."

For half an hour he tried to do so, but never came near one. I borrowed his gun (knowing my mare would let me shoot off her back), and I also tried for ages, but without success. I grew tired, and gave him back the gun. They were still running "round and round."

Finally, when they were in the bottom of the wood, I heard a bang! right up in the far quarter. "Surely," thought I, "he's never

been such a fool as to shoot one right away from them." But surely he had. Out of a rackway he presently came, and I could see by his pocket that he had got him. My temper was up.

"I've got him," he called out.

"Got him! You d——n fool," I yelled, "Why on earth did you want to shoot one while the hounds were at the other end of the wood?"

But we had to make the best of it. So I tied my thong round the cub's neck, and then said to the keeper, "Now, wait until I get half across that stubble field, and then 'holloa' like the ——." Away I went, drew him under the hedgeside, then on to a bit of tilth, up a furrow, where I dropped him a little way from the wood.

I galloped back and "halloa'd-away" until Jack Ward heard me. He came, all the hounds with him. I said "Wait a minute, Jack. Let's count them." I ran my eye over them—29 couples. They were all on but one,

so I said "Go on, Jack, he's gone away under that hedgeside."

Away they went, turned short under the other hedge, swung round, raced back to where I had left him, "threw up," swung back and pounced on him, "Whoo-hoop!"

Up came the old Squire. "Capital, George, capital!" he said. "Ah, you see what perseverance does. Well done! Blood at last!" Then he added:

"Funny thing, though, he did not go back into the wood, George?"

I said, "Didn't you see me gallop along the lane and crack my whip? I headed him."

"Ah," he said, "capital!"

Going home, Mr. Barnett left us, and as we turned away by Potton Church old Jack Ward turned to me and said:

"Can't quite make that kill out, governor. How was it?"

I told him.

"Oh," he said, "that's why he laid down, was it? Never should have caught one if we had stayed all night."

Many years afterwards, when Mr. Barnett was dining with me one evening, I told him also, reminding him of his words, "nothing like perseverance." I dare not have told him, had not many years intervened. He laughed, but I doubt whether, even so many years afterwards, he fully forgave me.

One of the best runs I ever had with the Cambridgeshire Hounds was the following :— We went to Potton Wood, and found at once. He came away on the Gamlingay side, and they ran very merrily, leaving Gamlingay on their left. My father, riding well forrard, viewed him over the Gamlingay and Waresley road. Then down the hill they raced, leaving Sand and Weaveley Woods on the left.

Turning a little, he crossed the high fields and bore away to the right again down to Little Barford. There he turned to the left, crossed the River Ouse just below Tempsford bridge, and I can see the hounds now swimming that river, just their heads showing, like a lot of wild duck. On they went, up to Chawston, and right on away to the left, and they pulled

a dead-beaten fox down just as he was crawling into Weston Wood.

During Bob Ward's time we were one day having a very good run indeed, and they were running beautifully down by Maddingly. Bob was just in front of me, and we came down to a thinnish hedge with a brook on the landing side. Over he went, but his horse blundered into the brook. I followed, and when I jumped off and ran back to him, old Bob was lying right between his horse's hind legs, and with his own legs all tangled up in the reins.

It was a ticklish predicament to be in, and I whipped out my knife and started to cut the reins half-way down, to free him. Bob was watching me. To my amazement he calmly remarked :

"Hold on a minute, Muster. Cut 'em close to the bit. Then I can have 'em stitched again."

It was just a toss-up whether I could release him before he got a kick on the head

which would have ended Bob's need for reins in this world; all the same, he did not want me to spoil them.

Bob Ward was a good huntsman, and the Hertfordshire people sing his praises to this day; I join most cordially in the chorus. But Bob dearly loved a fox, and he would go a long way to save one for his pack. I was out one day with my harriers, and we found a fox in the open and had a very good hunt with him. At that time the fox-hounds were kennelled at Stratton Park, and he came right up to the park, and I knew he was only just in front of me, and that he was pretty well beaten.

Bob stood against the gate in the park. "Did you see him, Bob?" I said.

"See him, yes," he said, "and he's at Sandy Warren by now." (Sandy Warren, as those of my readers acquainted with that country will know, was a good three miles off.) I was mad, for I knew old Bob was jealous, and wanted me to stop them.

"Well," I said, "if he's at Sandy Warren by now, I might as well let 'em go, for we sha'n't kill him." And I let them go.

The fox went round the house, and out of the park on the far side. How Bob Ward ever got across in time will always be a mystery to me, but he was there when we got over the park.

"Don't kill the old fellow, Mr. Race! Don't kill him!" he pleaded.

Just as I was going through the gate I saw reynard crawling along under the next hedge. However, they checked, and my Whipper-in turned them, and there was an end of it. But I knew that I had only to clap 'em into view, and they would have killed him.

A week afterwards Squire Barnett (then Master of Bob's pack) came to me.

"It would have served old Bob right if you had gone on and killed that fox," said he. "Fancy him telling you he was at Sandy Warren, when he knew perfectly well he was dead beat, and only just in front of you."

I had no idea at the time that Mr. Barnett was anywhere near, but he had apparently

witnessed the whole incident. He was as keen as old Bob, but he never let his enthusiasm get too strong for his true English sporting instincts.

Charles Barnett was a typical sportsman and English gentleman, and it goes without saying that he was very popular. Here is one tribute which Hesketh Lethbridge paid him and his pack, in the *New Sporting Magazine*, in 1838 :—

"I am able to bear witness to this fact, that I never saw a pack of hounds that wanted less whipping-in, or that seemed more determined to do or die, than the Cambridgeshire. They are what I call a coarse-looking hound, greatly dashed with the Fitzwilliam blood, but they are a pack (from what I saw of them) that, if I were a fox, I should be decidedly afraid of being before. I never saw a shrewder-looking or more civil servant than the Huntsman . . . The opinions I have expressed of this servant are formed from the expression of his brow, which I should say is all over what it ought to be

as far a huntsman is concerned. Mr. Barnett, the Master, could not be excelled for general good nature; indeed, I believe I add the sentiments of the whole Hunt when I say that no man is more generally, or justly beloved." And not a word of that encomium is flattery, as all will agree who knew him.

It is only natural during my long life, and the different Masters I have seen the Cambridgeshire under, that I have seen some exceedingly good Masters, and—may I add?—some bad ones. With the latter I am not here concerned, but of the good ones I must especially set out as another of the best, the late Charles S. Lindsell. "A good Master, and a good man to hounds." Many and many a clinking good run I enjoyed with the Cambridgeshire when he was the Master, and many a good run I am also delighted to remember that he had with me and my hounds.

Charles Lindsell was the only one with me in that great and memorable hunt I had with the white hart, which was the hardest run I ever rode to, and to which I shall refer more

fully later on. For years we rode together, and in the evening of our lives, after we had had reluctantly to leave the Chase to those with the years on their side, yet we loved to linger again over the days that were gone, as what old sportsman would not?

I would not like to own up to the number of boxes of cigars we have smoked together when, by the fireside of an evening, we have called up again the days of vigorous manhood, the hunts we had, and some of the exploits that we accomplished. But the "Tally-ho!" has sounded for the last time for my dear old comrade, as soon now it must also call to me. Yet there is nought to regret in having lived the full, vigorous, upright, true English life that was Charles Lindsell's, who was the very soul of honour, and one of the very few men, indeed, of whom it can be truthfully said, even in these defamatory days, that "No man had a word to say against him." Ah! I cannot pay too great a tribute to my friend, the last of my old school. In all the relations of life Charles Lindsell strictly

and most conscientiously fulfilled his duty. He was, indeed, a good man and a great sportsman.

Many other old friends that we have said adieu to now come back clearly to my memory—friends of whom one may fondly boast: "Equal there may be, but better, never." Where would you beat Fred Hogg, for instance? And where, to-day, will you find a man who could lower the colours of Sam Ongley? A kinder-hearted man, a better sportsman, and a harder rider you could not discover through the length and breadth of this kingdom.

My old friend, Charles Lindsell, made a gorse which was nearly always a certain find, and the home of many litters. But this good sportsman had a litter of cubs there one year, and, much to his disgust, the vixen was poisoned. So they dug the cubs out and put them in a room in an old cottage, until they got strong and began to think about getting their own living. Then one day the Master said to his keeper:

"We ought to teach them to kill, now. They are surely big enough. Catch that old duck at the farm, and put her in with them to-night."

The old duck was caught, and was duly put in with the cubs. Next morning they went to look at the cubs, and to see what had been the fate of their aged visitor. There sat the old duck in one corner, as happy as possible, and to show that she appreciated the honour paid her, and the company she was in, she had kindly laid an egg!

That mention of the old duck reminds me of another amusing little "sell" which I witnessed one day. I saw Jack Ward mark a fox to ground, and they put his terrier in. The terrier was gone a long time, but when at last he came back Jack sang out:

"Ah! See how he has punished the poor old fellow! Go on my men, dig away."

And so they "went on," and dug a trench big enough to bury an elephant in, and after wasting about an hour—out came an old buck rabbit!

There are some foxes, it is said, that no hounds can kill. I recall one that was famous in my boyhood, and my father gives the story in his "Life of a Foxhound":—

"There was a fox in the Brampton country which, from its great resemblance to the picture of the wolves in Lloyd's *Wild Sports in the North*, we had named 'Mr. Lloyd.' The Cambridgeshire Hounds ran him eight seasons before they could get hold of him. They were in Brampton Wood one morning when I said to the Master: 'I hope they won't get on to poor old Lloyd to-day.'

"'I don't know him,' said he. 'If he goes over the ride show him to me.'

"'Then,' said I, 'You must not turn your head, for he goes over these broad rides like a streak of greased lightning.'

"There were two or three went across, and, at length, bounce he came into the middle of the ride, and with another bound he was over and gone again.

"'That's him!' I shouted.

"'Oh, yes,' said the Master. 'There is no mistaking him, for he is as long as a cart rope, and as black as the devil.'

"However, his hour came at length. They found him one day in Limage Wood, and after four hours and twenty minutes the hounds went down into Ellington Meadows *by themselves*, for every horse was brought to a walk. Then a 'tally-ho' farmer who was in the meadow, seeing him come with his back up, scarcely able

to walk, and the hounds not much better and in the same field with him, ran after them up to Graffham Wood, where, after taking him one turn round, he had the gratification of hearing a woodman 'Whoo-hoop.'

"He got to them as quickly as he could, but of course they had eaten him; and there stood the farmer 'alone amid victorious hounds.' The next consideration was what he should do with them, for not a horse was in sight, nor did one come up; he therefore took a pad away from one of the hounds, and by holding it up and cheering them he got them back into the Ellington road, where he found the field standing off their horses, looking at them, poor things, for they were ready to drop from exhaustion.

"One bitch, Cora, was missing, and the Whipper-in went back into the wood, and found her with 'Mr. Lloyd's' head in her mouth, which he took away from her.

"And after all this severe work the hounds were, by road, eighteen miles from their kennels. As the distance was great I did not go on that day, but about nine o'clock in the evening there came a violent ringing at my front door, accompanied by a rattling 'View-halloa.'

"'What's up now?' I called, when the door opened and in rushed a young friend, swinging in his hand the head of the supposed invincible 'Mr. Lloyd.'

"'There's the head of the old boy,' he said. 'He's done at last; but, by Heavens, he has nearly killed the whole lot of us. For the last forty-five minutes such a scene of distress in all your experience you never witnessed. Out of the whole Field not a single horse

could make a trot. I am fearful we shall hear some fatal news to-morrow, for horses were lying about in all directions.'

"We then examined the head, and found it was more like a wolf's than a fox's, with a pair of jaws like a mantrap."

The mask of "Mr. Lloyd" is still treasured.

I must not mention who the Master was who was one day looking over Bob Ward's pack, and making remarks on certain hounds. He came at length to one of Bob's particular old favourites.

"I don't like her a bit, Bob," he said.

"Nor do the Foxes," old Bob replied.

One very sharp winter we were stopped for weeks. Bob Ward came down to my place one afternoon, and I fetched one of my horns and we went down to the river. There each of us took a turn at blowing, just for a little practice, and also, perhaps, with some idea of teasing the enemy. I fear that the foxes must have felt very uncomfortable, for we made the sound of the horn echo and re-echo from the hills all over Sandy Warren.

COMRADES.

We have ridden oft together,
  We have gone thro' many a burst,
And either one or other
  Alternately was first.
I never knew a good one,
  In which we were not there,
Though mounted both on young ones,
  We did what few would dare.

We have swish'd o'er many a rasper,
  Through many a bull-finch bored,
We have squeezed through cramps and corners
  On nags we've both adored;
And if a thundering ox-fence
  Has stared us in the face,
We have sent them swinging o'er it,
  Resolved to keep our place.

How often at the others
  We've turned our heads to look,
As we pulled our nags together
  To send them at the brook!
We have laughed to see them craning
  When o'er it we had sprung;
We knew 'twas only feigning,
  We knew they dare not come.

And when the wind was pump'd out,
  And the Field became select,
Before a soul should lick us
  We'd risk our limbs and neck.
Oh! what our joy could equal
  When "Conrad" pulled him down,
When all the Field were beaten,
  And you and I alone!

"THISTLE WHIPPER."

Chapter V.

MAKING A PACK.

IN making a pack I maintain that breeding is everything; that was the view my father held, and there was not much about hounds and hunting that he did not know; and my own long experience has proved his opinion to be correct. I always say that you must use a dog that "drives," and an all-round good one in his work as well as in his looks, and select for him a suitable bitch. Thus you may improve your pack vastly by careful breeding. I have always understood that the Fitzwilliams have been noted as a good pack of hunting hounds, with plenty of "drive" in them. Perhaps they have been lucky in their huntsmen, securing quiet and quick men. I can speak for one, Tom Sebright.

"Thistle Whipper" used to say (and I can bear out his words) that the fox-hound, provided he is let alone, will hunt as low a scent as any animal.

I sometimes crossed my bitches with the Oakley small stallion hounds, and very good results I got. Another pack I was very fond of was Sir George Brooke's.

If you want a good pack of hunting hounds you must breed them yourself, and you cannot be too careful in selecting the right bitches for the dogs you are using. Breed them for legs, necks and shoulders, but don't forget that they are not of much use in the hunting field without a nose.

I think I can claim to know something about this subject. Charles Lindsell and I judged the Cambridgeshire Hounds in Mr. Tindall's time, and also while Mr. Ashton, Mr. Newton and Mr. George Evans were Masters of that pack. And we also judged the Oakley pack for thirty years, during the time of Mr. Arkwright and Mr. Macan, Mr. Butt-Miller and Captain Browning.

Some Masters of Hounds breed from a dog just because he has good shoulders and stands well. I say: Breed from the dog that uses his nose; one with plenty of "dash"; one that "drives"; and mate him with a suitable bitch. And bear in mind that in most kennels you can find a dog that not only fills the eye on the flags, but one that is also equally good in his work.

I was always most careful about breeding, and I think I am justified in saying that I always had a few couples to show on the flags, and had no hesitation in pulling them out to show to any critic or judge of a hound who happened to call at the Old Road farm.

I do not mean to say it is impossible to buy good hounds; far from it. But if you want a real good pack, and desire to show satisfactory results, I consider that there is only one way, and that is to breed them yourself. I have heard the opinions of several good judges on this subject, and I have always found that they unanimously agreed with me.

George Evans once said to me, when he hunted my pack: "They want no hunting. They make their own casts."

But there are many other things to remember in getting a pack together. More than sixty years ago my father wrote:—

"There are some foxes and circumstances that will defeat the wisest Master, and the wisest huntsman, even if they were really as wise as they *fancy* they are. If you are beaten—and beaten you will be at times—examine yourself well into the cause of it, and you will find in nine cases out of ten that you lost him through not paying attention to your line-hunting hounds. All the world are breeding for speed, but I have often proved what I tell you, that *a line-hunter is the fastest hound.* Heaven only knows the agony I endure when I see a hound flashing and flying about, with his head in the air, or when I see a fellow with his mouth open, screaming like a fieldkeeper.

"How is a line-hunter the fastest hound? Well, by a killing line-hunter is meant, not a

hound that sticks his nose to the ground as if it were glued there, but a hound that, when he has stopped long enough to satisfy himself that the scent is there, holds forward on the line of it, occasionally feeling for it; and you will often see, when the scent fails at head and those flashy devils have gone half-a-field without it, and knew not what to do—you will see them turn back and look for these pilots, these sages, these guides of the pack. You will see some go back to them and follow them in their scent, and if they stop and touch it they dash at him, catch it up, and away they go with it, followed by the applause of the whole Field, who say, 'Look at So-and-so!' But who showed 'So-and-so' where it was? The pilot has done in one minute what would have taken the flyers five; and you must agree that it is the fastest hound that gets the quickest to his fox. He is not only quick himself, but the cause of speed in others."

Again, a word to the Master. "Thistle Whipper" says: "What will you say when

I tell you that I have seen a Master of Fox-hounds, after putting them into covert, gallop away from them under the pretence of a perfect knowledge of the run of foxes from that covert, blow his horn a mile off in the valley, after he had *shaken out a bagman*?"

A great deal depends, also, upon having good, quiet Whips. "Remember, in whatever you may have to do with a hunting dog, whether hound, spaniel, or pointer, *you cannot be too quiet*. As the old adage advises, 'Keep your eyes open and your mouth shut.' The noise and bother and confusion that I have witnessed in some fields has so distracted the hounds that they did not know what to do. Some have gone to the 'holloa,' some to the horn, and some would not quit the line, until the pack became dispersed all over the covert, all listening for each other and none at work; and amid all this the fox has slipped away, and nobody knew where."

The Hon. Grantley Berkeley, who hunted the Oakley Hounds seventy years ago, also

wrote some most interesting reading, and advice, about the proper treatment of hounds, in the "*Sporting Review*," in 1839. He says :—

"There is no animal whose disposition is less understood by the majority of those who avail themselves of his properties than the fox-hound. Perhaps in the field of fifty men there is not one intimately acquainted with the peculiarities of the animal, with the mysterious resources of his gifted nature, or with the wonderful extent of his sagacity. There are many Masters and many men who case their lower extremities in boots, wear scarlet coats and carry horns at their saddles, designating themselves as 'huntsmen,' who know as little of the real value of the animal they use, as the run of the creature which the animal pursues, and of each as much as the plodding ploughman knows of the speed of the Arabian courser. In ninety-nine cases out of one hundred, hounds are used as if they are toys, wooden playthings hewn from logs, without feeling of mind or

body, without sensibility of nerves, or as if they were not endowed with the spirit which recoils from unkindness, with the hope that shrinks from disappointment, or with the limb that fails from exertion. There is not one of that faithful class of creatures coming within the denomination of the dog more capable of individual affection than the fox-hound, and scarcely one of them that equals him in endurance, perseverance and self-devotedness.

"To his huntsman—the man that ought to be his chum in his sports, rather than his taskmaster—the hound is ever more or less attached, according as the humanity or otherwise, of the latter may deserve. His character takes its tone from his example; if the huntsman is quiet, quick and steady, so is the hound, if wild and uncertain, and noisy, so is the hound, and if slack, slow and spiritless, the hound becomes the same. Let the huntsman love the animal under his charge; let him attend to his comforts; nurse him in his sickness, and share in his sorrows; aid him

in the field with judicious council, applaud his virtues, and check his faults (at the right time), then the fox-hound is capable of an affection which in its single-purposed fidelity might shame the heart of man.

"The most dangerous thing, when in injudicious hands, is the whip, and I believe there is not one man in ten fit to be trusted with it both in the kennel and out. Where one fault is whipped *out* of a hound forty or more are likely to be whipped *in*, and I am thoroughly convinced that twenty hounds are spoilt where two are benefited by indiscriminate severity. Have a kind word for each hound, treat them to a little language they understand, and you will find that attentions of this sort attach hounds more quickly to their huntsmen than any general rule or labour, and on the love of a hound to his huntsmen, and on the faith which each hound has on receiving sure assistance from him under all difficulties, mainly depends the quickness of the work in wood or field. It is as requisite for the perfections of sport to establish a mutual and generous confidence

between huntsman and hound, as it is to induce reliance in each other between a general and his army. You do not make a boy steady by keeping him constantly confined to his room; you do not break a retriever by keeping him tied up; and you cannot break a hound of faults unless you let them develop themselves naturally and then place, evidently, before him, the path of vice and the path of virtue. You might as well attempt to be beforehand with the faults of humanity, and whip infants at the breast, as lash a young hound until he knows right from wrong."

With those views I entirely agree, and I have valued the Hon. Grantley Berkeley's advice so highly that I have always treasured the magazines in which his articles appeared. His theory of treating hounds differs somewhat from the modern way, but experience will prove to you that he was right. Again, he wrote:—

"When I first commenced fox-hunting in Bedfordshire, on running a fox to ground,

though their endeavours impeded the men with spades, I used to let the hounds think that they assisted in digging him out. Nor would I allow the people at work to push a hound rudely out of the way, however much his scratching at the hole might interfere with the breaking up of the drain. In cub-hunting, or at the end of a sufficient day, when I had no one's pleasure to think of but my own, I have encouraged my hounds to tear up a drain, assisted them a little with a spade, until they have, as it were, by their own exertions, drawn and killed their fox, and this I found to be of the utmost service in bringing young hounds on."

Upon the face of it, is it not clearly better to treat your hounds in this way, than to have a Whipper-in chopping them here, there and everywhere, keeping them right back from the earth or drain, and not letting them have a look in? If you run a fox to ground, how many great "chaw-bacons" you get there, all wanting to see as much as they can. Then is it not natural the hounds should also want

to see what is going on, and that they take an interest in the situation? Again, to show how the Hon. Grantley Berkeley studied the nature of the fox-hound, he said :—

"I remember a young bitch, who had not entered well, was out once when we ran a fox from the Harrold Woods to a drain. She was very fond of me, and always seemed to watch every look and turn of my head, and while I was standing with one foot in the entrance of the drain to keep the hounds from wedging themselves in, she came up to me to play. During the time that we were digging the fox out, I pretended to scratch eagerly at different places myself, and while I did so, half in play, she would stand on her hind legs and scratch my shoulders, and sometimes assist me in working at the holes. She was in the midst of the pack when they killed their fox, and, though a little alarmed, from that day she became useful and began hunting, and she turned out a wonderfully good bitch. By thus permitting my hounds to indulge their natural propensities, and by letting them

discover the why and wherefore of the occurrences of the day, they entered as well again into the pleasures of the chase, and became steady creatures instead of mere slaves to superficial rule.

"In waiting with them for the arrival of spades to open a drain, on observing the approach of labourers with the necessary instruments, they have started away from me the length of a field to meet them, throwing their tongues, in individual instances, in a joyful recognition, and dancing up to and even kissing the handles of the spades, as much as to say, 'These are the boys we want.' This done, they would race back to me again, and to the drain, as if inviting the bearers of the spades to make more haste in their assistance. In doing this, there was no riot; the merry tongues which were thrown blithely in the air did not babble; they were simple and sensible gratulations to those who were bringing aid, and what a sin it would have been to have regarded these natural proceedings as insubordination, unsteadiness and riot, and

to have suffered the Whipper-in rudely to have checked it!"

May I, before concluding this chapter, say a word about the old custom of "capping"? I must say that in my opinion it is a great improvement to fox-hunting to have done away with the custom of capping for the huntsman when he had killed, or marked his fox to the ground, as to a certain extent it has finished the days of the "bagman." Capping was putting temptation in the huntsman's way, as he could buy a fox for £1, and if he was lucky and did happen to get a gallop, it meant about £3 in his pocket. Again, it would encourage keepers to destroy foxes; they would see their coverts drawn, and a find to them perhaps every time they came. What did they care about preserving the wild animals? They got their "find" money, and Mr. Huntsman got paid well for his work. But those days have gone, and the wild animal has now taken the place of the "bagman," thanks to the sporting covert owners.

May I add a codicil to that, and say that in the Cambridgeshire country I can speak with some knowledge on this point, as I can go back perhaps a week or two longer than any of the members now hunting with those hounds. I must not forget, also, to mention that this country owes half its success to the Masters who have been in office, as they have been very lucky in having some very good sportsmen at the head of affairs, and I hear on all sides good accounts of foxes this season, which speaks not a little for our present Master, Mr. Crossman. In saying that in the short time he has been here he has shown himself to be a good sportsman, and a very popular Master, I am only echoing the voice of the whole Cambridgeshire country. May he long be with us.

I am sure it is half the battle to be on good understanding with the covert owners, farmers, and last but not least the keepers. If the country like you, you need have little fear of being short of foxes, unless your country is attacked by the ravages of mange, which of course none of us can provide against.

A Master of Hounds does not waste any time that is spent with his pack and his huntsman, looking into everything, and personally inspecting the hounds. But we once had a Master of the Cambridgeshire who, when asked by a friend what sort of a young entry he had, replied: "I really don't know. I don't go into the kennels any more than I am obliged. I think they smell so!"

Speaking of the Cambridgeshire country, and also of my own hounds, I am indeed sorry to say that there is a great difference in this side of the country now and twenty-five years ago. When one looks round what a marked difference there is: I have seen as many as twenty sportsmen, all well equipped for the Chase, ride out of Biggleswade to meet a pack of hounds. Alas! where have they gone now? So few of them left, and soon there will be an end of the "Old School." It is indeed sad to think how this side of the country has degenerated, and for the time being I see no immediate prospects of it altering for the better, and hard though it seems,

there is but little doubt that Biggleswade as a sporting town has seen its day.

When you take such families as the Lindsells, Archdales, Taddys, Burnetts, Powers, Barnetts, Hoopers, and others, you can then see, now that they have all paid their last tribute to hunting, that it would indeed be hard to fill the places they held in supporting and upholding the glories of the Chase. And one cannot help looking back to the old days with a certain amount of regret, when one thinks what Biggleswade could at one time produce, and what it does at the present.

Mr. Charles Barnett, *late Master of the Cambridgeshire.*

Chapter VI.

DEER HUNTING.

THE wild stag is, of course, the best of the deer tribe—"the antlered monarch of the waste." Next to him give me the fallow deer, before the carted deer, for I cannot see much sport in turning a deer out and stopping hounds when they get too close to him. I must admit, however, that a turned-out hind or stag frequently gives an excellent run. But go and find your quarry. The uncertainty about finding, and the pleasure of the "find," all contribute vastly to the glory of the Chase.

Some good runs that my father had with deer I can still well remember. One day he turned one out near the Baldock turnpike gate. He ran over the open and up the hill to Kelshall, then turned to the left and came down to Morden Heath. Away to the left, down

to Eyeworth Bottoms, close to the osier beds, and there they checked. Only three hounds were then with the governor, and he held them to the left, but did not "hit it," so he thought "He's in the osier beds." He put in what few hounds he had. Out jumped the deer, and went away up Morden Field. The people in Morden heard the horn and ran out, met the deer and "blanched" him. By this time an old bitch called "Trollop" had made up a lot of lost ground, and she saw him coming back down the field to the river. She turned short back also and went down to the river as hard as she could pelt, into the river she jumped, swam over on to the other side, and there stood waiting for him. He plunged into the river, went over to the Eyeworth side, but there met old "Trollop," and every time he tried to come out she caught hold of his ear and "ducked him." He was very beaten, and had not strength enough to get out, and there they took him.

I once went to Wimpole Coverts to hunt some deer that had got out of the Park. The

coverts were full of hares, and everybody said it was perfectly useless me coming there with a pack of harriers. There were fourteen deer out, but we killed nine and drove the other five back into the Park. After we had been the last time Lord Royston said to me:

"Well Mr. Race, if I had not seen it done I would not have believed it possible for a pack of harriers to come here, with all these hares running about in all directions, and for your hounds to take no notice of them and stick to the deer in the way they do. It is wonderful."

I have previously remarked that many harrier men say you must not hunt deer or foxes with harriers, or you will spoil them. My experience confirms me in the opinion that such objection is "all rot."

I have been to Waresley, deer-hunting, for a fortnight, and then two days later we have been hare-hunting again, and all I can say is that I could see no difference in the way they hunted.

A deer is a very clever animal to hunt. Once I was running one in Weaveley Wood,

and he was getting beaten. They were coming up to the covert with him, and I was in a rackway not far from a cross-ride. My friend Bill Pope stood at the crossing, watching the riding. They came right up to it, into it, and over, and then threw up.

I said, "Bill, you've missed him." He assured me that no deer had gone over there, so I blew, and they came back to me. And as I was riding through the brambles, my horse must have nearly trod on him, for the rein of my bridle caught on his antlers. "Oh," I said, "That's your game," and after him I went. He did not go a hundred yards before he gave a great bound, and then, down he went again in a big patch of grass. I kept my eye on the place and rode up to it. There he lay, antlers flat on his back, and all but concealed. I cracked my whip and up he jumped, but this time he did not go far before they pulled him down.

Another deer which I ran from Wrestlingworth Plantation gave me, I shall always think, one of the hardest tasks I ever had.

He made me put my thinking cap on and no mistake, but I did at last kill him.

It was late in the year, and nearly every field was just freshly sown. I "hit it," into the fields and out, and that was all. I don't believe they ran over ten or twelve fields all through that hunt.

We had met at Wrestlingworth Plantation, and were going hare-hunting, but I noticed that a workman was looking very hard at us, and at last he threw down his pick and came over to us. That was about eleven o'clock.

"This morning," said he, "I saw a deer go down this field, about half past six o'clock, and he jumped out at the bottom."

I took them to the place he had indicated, and they "caught it" out of the field, but could not go on. I told my brother to enquire of some ploughmen if they had seen him, and he came back with the information that they had seen him jump over a gate towards Potton Wood. So I held them on,

"hit it" into the lane, saw a gap in the covert and put them in.

They had not been in long before they started to speak. I cheered them, and they got together and ran through the top quarter, turned back, came right down the wood to the bottom, and he was then just going away when he met two horsemen. They blanched him, and he turned short back up the covert, out and away over Hatley Park, up to Walk Wood, away to Wrestlingworth Plantation, turned down this over the Hatley and Wrestlingworth road, down to New England farm, where they checked. I held them to the left. "No." Back to the right, away they went up to Tadlow Church, over the road, down Tadlow Bottoms, and I kept "hitting it" into the field and out, and field after field were all fresh sown. So we went on. One gentleman said to Mr. Lindsell, who was with us:

"I think I'll go home. He'll never catch him. Why, the fool keeps running hares!"

"Well," Mr. Lindsell said, "don't go yet. Stop and see what the 'fool' does do."

So he came on and they ran down to the river below Wrestlingworth, over, and I got a "holloa" on the hill above Hook's Mill. I galloped to it, "hit it" out of the road, and hunted, only hunted, him on and up to a shepherd on Ashwell Common, who blanched him, and he dropped down in a big blackthorn bush. They pushed him up and he came back to the brook at the bottom of Ashwell Common. I met him, and he went back over the brook, with the hounds close to him. Then all at once they "threw up." No one had seen him, and I was completely puzzled. We had been so close to him, and his sudden disappearance in that manner was little short of a miracle. "D——n!" I said. "What's he done?"

I stood right on the brook bank, and I saw a bitch called "Paragon" swimming about in the brook as if she could wind something. She swam up to what looked like a black knob in the middle of the stream, and suddenly caught fast hold of it. To my utter surprise, out he

bounded, and they ran him for a few fields and knocked him over.

So Mr. Lindsell said to that aforementioned gentleman: "Well, what do you think of the 'old fool' now?"

Late one afternoon I remember standing in Gamlingay Wood at the Cross-ride. It was the last chance we had of finding that day, and the beaters were bringing it up. The quarter next to the Gamlingay road was cut down. To show how hounds love the scent of a deer, I can assure you that if there was one hare there were fifty. A fox also went over this cut-down quarter. My brother, on the outside, "holloa'd away!" and every hound was gone like a shot. Right over all those scents they went, never taking the slightest notice of anything. Over the stake-and-bound fence they went, and away with the deer.

The keepers always said that they were steadier from hares when we went deer-hunting than the fox-hounds were. The great secret is to keep the hounds as close as you

possibly can to the deer. Then they are not half so likely to trouble about hares.

I saw one old bitch, "Stella," a nailer at a deer, one day in Weaveley Wood come into a rackway nearly in view with a deer. But he turned short back; she missed him and stood broadside across the rackway, when a hare, frightened out of her life, came slap bang into her ribs. The old bitch just turned her head, and then off she went back into the quarter again, never deigning to give the slightest attention to the hare, and intent only upon the deer. "Stella" was a wonder, one of my very best.

Many and many another good run I could relate, and looking back over it all I think I must own to having had my share of deer-hunting. In my salad days I would hunt deer, fox, or hare with anybody.

But in hunting, as with all else in this world, it should never be forgotten that "There is a time for everything." There are times when a huntsman should be quick, and others when he should "give them time."

You may depend upon it there is a lot of truth in the old saying that "A good huntsman makes a good pack of hounds." Once establish confidence in your hounds by taking them in the right place, then you need have little hesitation in backing them if ever you are in serious doubts as to the onward flight of the fugitive.

I once had a dog hound that never "ran heel." I have seen him stop dead and the body go down a furrow full cry, but not one yard would he move. And I sometimes think that hounds have a great deal more sense than many of the fools who ride after them.

How often you see a real, good, hound on a cold bit of land—see him or her "catch it," and speak. Then watch the body fly to that "tongue that tells no lies." You may back that hound, even when the body fail to detect the quarry is on. Keep on backing her until she lands them on good ground, when, with a chorus away they will go, showing that the old bitch has once again placed them beyond all doubts. Without her, perhaps they never

would have got out of the difficulty, and she alone deserves all the honour, although few of the Field may have the intelligence to acknowledge the fact.

We all know that a huntsman has a lot to put up with and no man is more criticised, justly or unjustly. How often you will hear the remark, "Oh! Where is the fool taking them? The fox has gone this way." But perhaps he has not gone where the critic said, and the huntsman "hits it" again. Then, however, nothing is said. Again, some of the Field will occasionally ride over them and drive them over it. I always think of poor old Tom Sebright, huntsman to the Fitzwilliam, whenever an incident of that kind occurs. For weeks the Field kept over-riding his hounds, and at last Tom gave way to rather strong language. He was called over the coals about it, and was warned about using bad language to the Field, and Tom said he would not do so any more.

Well, within a week, they were one day running very fast and came to a check;

everybody rode right on top of them, and Tom, being a little behind, saw in a minute what had happened. He came galloping up and sang out :—

"Ah! That's right gentlemen. Ride right over them. Drive 'em over it. Go on, spoil your own sport. They hunt as well again if you ride over them. Then go home and say the huntsman and the hounds are good for nothing."

I can quite understand how vastly relieved poor old Tom would feel after such an outburst. But he was perfectly right.

Some day it must happen to every huntsman that he will be honoured by having "Mr. Cunning" out with him, on a horse that he has not the faintest idea of riding or managing. He will bring his horse in amongst your hounds, no matter how many polite warnings you give him. His horse keeps looking and snorting.

"Mind your horse, sir! Take him away. He'll kick one directly."

"Oh, no. He's all right," comes the exasperating answer, and ten to one

accompanied with a sneer that would bring up the dander of an angel.

At last the inevitable happens, as we all knew perfectly well that it would. His horse lets drive, and if you have got a favourite hound out that day, I'll lay my life to a penny it will be that one.

"Mr. Cunning" is then "Awfully sorry, sir," and takes his horse away when the mischief is done. And I have seen him spur and hit the poor beast after the hound has been hurt, just as if it were the horse's fault. Yes, and on one or two occasions I have had the pleasure of "unburdening my soul" with such an unreasonable "sportsman," and I fancy that sometimes the incident may not have been altogether unprofitable to him. I have seen this happen so many times that I am afraid I have sometimes wished the horse would send "Mr. Cunning" flying over his head, and relieve the rest of the world by breaking the d——n fool's neck.

Sometimes, also, you will go to a "holloa!" "Where has he gone, old chap?" you ask, and

you get the delightfully definite answer: "In that field" with a wide sweep of the arm towards perhaps a field of hundred acres. They rarely tell you how far down or how far away, and probably when you try the place which you think is meant, your quarry has not gone there at all. A good "holloa" is a godsend to a huntsman, and after a good run it very often kills your animal; but a bad one is always the hardest strain upon your temper. If some of the people who have given me bad "holloa's" could have heard the "damson tart" I gave them, they might not have quite taken it as complimentary. On the other hand I was always open to acknowledge a good turn of this kind, and after I had killed, if the man was there who had given me a real good "holloa!" I used to make a point of saying to him "Thank you, old chap. It was your 'holloa' that killed her for me."

All followers of the hounds will admit, however, that the pleasures of the Chase far out-weigh all the trials and vexations one

may meet with. In Mr. Delmé Radcliffe's book he speaks of the Chase as "The noble science." What better name could you give it?

May I here be allowed a word or two to the Field? Do you always realize, gentlemen, how much you owe to the farmers whose land you ride over, and are you always careful enough in observing those obligations which the farmer's kindness and courtesy lay upon you? I have been "pulled up" once or twice, especially in my younger days, for the very failings to which I am now referring, and therefore you must take this little lecture as meant in all honesty and sincerity of purpose. But generally throughout my long hunting career I think I can claim to have been careful to do as little damage as possible, and my reward has, almost without exception, been a ready welcome to my hounds. May some of the younger generation tear a leaf out of this book, and always remember that without the co-operation and courtesy and

assistance of the farmers, we might as well sell all our horses and hounds, for there would be an end to this greatest of English sports.

I am bound to admit that some people who hunt are not careful enough. In too many cases, how little they care when they come out for a day's amusement, what damage they do, or how much annoyance they cause to the man who is good enough to allow them to enjoy their sport over his land. Some people will ride anywhere, leave gates open for stock to stray through, then go home and dine comfortably and well after a good day's hunting, go to bed and sleep quite peacefully, without a thought of the poor farmer and his men, who may be up half the night searching for colts or cattle which have strayed because of such wicked folly. I never thought it a sin to "let out" some of my choicest at any man I saw doing wilful or foolish damage. Is a man, just because he gives £20 to a Hunt, entitled to look upon himself as such a very

fine fellow that he may gallop here, there, and everywhere? I do not think so.

I have seen some men go into a towering rage when they have come to a chained-up gate, where there is a field of beans, or perhaps when the country is very wet. But out of consideration for the farmer I have always called out "'ware beans, gentlemen!" The non-hunting farmer who allows us to ride over his land is one of the best sportsmen in the country, and it is the duty of every Master of Hounds to see that every consideration is shown to him. Offenders should be most strictly dealt with. Those who do not know right from wrong ought to stay at home; they are only a detriment to the hunt.

Only those who have been Masters and are Masters of Hounds know what it is to hold that—shall I say unthankful—position. No one knows how much a Master has to put up with. I always said there must be a fool born every minute, and that most of them came out hunting with me. And you

must always have your hand in your pocket, and a kind word for every one.

Now for a few passing reflections on those things that may be primarily deemed the active duties of a Master of Hounds. I think that in the first place he must be popular. The man whose study it is to please the many has a task of no easy description, and yet, unless a Master can accomplish it, he can neither expect a subscription sufficient to meet his expenses, preservation of foxes, nor anything like a satisfactory extent of country. I should explain that I am alluding particularly to the Master of a subscription pack, for it must be obvious that if a gentleman hunts his own hounds, without receiving subscriptions, he is not open to the same difficulties, and is not so dependent upon his powers to please Dick, Tom, or Harry. But the Master of a subscription pack has far more to contend with. Land-owners and occupiers, or covert owners, are not compelled to permit twenty-five couples of hounds to draw a covert in

their possession, just because we have an idea that "Charles" is at home and in that certain covert. Neither are they obliged by any written or unwritten law, to allow a hundred or so of horses and riders to break down their fences and rails, or to gallop at their own sweet will over the growing crops. At the same time, if the proper means are adopted, ninety-nine out of a hundred owners and occupiers you will find are good fellows, who will gladly consent to the hunting over their land, and who will reck little or nothing of the injuries that may be occasioned.

What are those "proper means"? In the foremost rank stand civility and general courtesy to all. I am quite sure that is one of the chief features, if not the principal, to be observed by a Master if his object is to enjoy good sport, and above all to be held with respect. I have heard many stories of Masters and their roughness of bearing towards anybody and everybody, but the days of uncouth language and hard words have gone, and it is, without a doubt, a great

mistake for a Master of Hounds to "blow up" about anything and everything. I am afraid that in my happy days of hunting I was like my hounds, very fond of "throwing my tongue," but an unkind word spoken while hunting meant very little with me, and I have many many times deeply lamented my hasty words, although at the time I could not for the life of me help it.

To discountenance unfair riding in the field, or unnecessarily injuring fences, is also a duty that a Master owes to the farmers. And it cannot be expected that farmers will preserve foxes if they are to be seriously injured by them; thus all claims made by them should be placed in the hands of some responsible person who can ascertain the real damage done; and I always found that the farmers are a real good set of fellows, who would not dream of putting in an unjust claim.

And now that I have been careful to insist upon courtesy and fair treatment for those to whom we owe so much, may I express the

hope that I shall not be mistaken as holding the view that hunting, properly conducted, is likely to do serious damage to the farmer? Not for worlds would I disregard a cry of "'ware beans!" or take the Field over a piece of seeds that is very wet, but I do not think it hurts a field of wheat to ride over it providing the land is not hock and knee deep.

I can recall one occasion when we took a deer on a piece of wheat, and, of course, we trampled it down a great deal in that place. The farmer was angry, and "blew me up" a rum 'un, and wanted compensation. So I promised that I would come back to him in July, and look at his wheat. I met him one day in that month, at the field gate, and civilly gave him "Good morning." He said:—

"Well, Mr. Race, I can still see where you took that deer."

"Can you, indeed?" I asked.

"Yes," he said. "You come along with me, and I'll show you."

We went into the field, and he pointed out the spot.

"But," I said, "that is the best piece of wheat in the whole field."

"Yes," he agreed, with a laugh, "but that is where you took him."

Jealousy in the Field is a bad thing, and is apt at times to be rather dangerous. As a warning against that weakness I will relate the sad fate that befel four well-known gentlemen who were very jealous of each other, and who all happened to come out with us one day.

My father was hunting them then, and I was Whipper-in. We met that day at Dunton, and that quartette constituted the Field. They were all bent on excelling and surpassing each other.

We went first on to a piece of ploughed, very black loam, and as soon as we got started, down went Mr. Drew's horse, and rolled over him—the fate of No. 1.

At the same time up jumped a hare, and away they went. Past Dunton Fen and up to

the Sutton meadows. Messrs. Rose, Chapman and Smith were still as intent as ever upon beating each other. Just before we got to the Potton road a fresh hare jumped up, and six couples went back, which I had to go and stop, while the body went on. I stopped them, and when I got back into the road I heard Mr. Chapman shouting. He had been thrown, and his horse stood about a dozen yards off, showing his teeth.

"Coop, coop, coop!" the old gentleman was calling, but the cob was dodging him round a tree, its mouth open, and all enticement was unavailing.

"What's up?" I asked.

"I think that limb of the devil belongs to Billy Button," he replied. "I can't catch him. Every time I get near him he comes at me with his mouth open."

(Billy Button was the proprietor of a circus which in those days used to visit this district, and he had one horse which had been trained to apparently turn very vicious suddenly, in the middle of a performance, and to go for

everybody with his mouth wide open, quickly clearing the ring, helter skelter.)

But I could not wait. Going on, I came to the brook, and on the opposite bank an extraordinary spectacle awaited me. "Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! you brute!" the third of our quartette, Mr. Rose, was calling, but his horse was fast disappearing.

"Look at him, George!" he cried as I came up. "He's pitched me over his head into that darnation brook, and for heaven's sake stop him, or he'll soon be in the German Ocean!"

That gentleman looked particularly spick-and-span when he came out with us that morning, and his coat, white breeches and top-boots were faultless. Now he was a sorry picture indeed as he stood there uselessly raving; hatless and dishevelled, he was covered from head to feet with the black slime of the brook into which he had fallen.

The fourth and last of our Field, Mr. Smith, I caught up just as I rejoined the body with my six couples. "Where are the

Photo] *Elliott & Fry.*

THE BIGGLESWADE HARRIERS, AND VETERAN MASTER.

others?" he enquired. I told him. "Aha! Capital! And so I have beaten them all," he said.

Scarcely had the words been uttered before his horse put both legs into a rabbit hole, and over he went. The hounds were still going on, and so of course I could not stop; and many and many a time since, as a warning to youngsters, I have related this true story of what befel those four old gentlemen who were jealous riders over a country.

Chapter VII.

A GREAT RUN.

MY "Great Run," as it is always spoken of in this hunting country, occurred on October 19th, 1847. While still at the breakfast table that morning, my house-keeper came in with the message:

"Pepper, the clock-maker, would like to speak to you, sir."

I went out to him. "Well, Pepper, what is it?"

"As I was coming from Muggerhanger yesterday afternoon, sir," he said, "I saw a great stag jump into the road, and out again, and go off towards Sheerhatch Wood."

"I am very much obliged to you, Pepper," I replied. "Thank you so much for coming, and if we find him I'll give you a crown."

I went back and hurriedly finished my breakfast, thinking it over meantime. Of course *I had to go*, there needed little thinking about that, and I ordered my cob at once, and off I started for Muggerhanger.

"But dash it!" thought I, as I jogged along, "This is no good. I must try for'ard." So I turned to Southill, in the hope of hearing some later news of him. I was passing Mr. Samuel Whitbread's place, Southill Park, when I heard somebody call me. Turning my head I saw Sam Baily, Mr. Whitbread's agent.

"You are the very chap I wanted to see," he called out. "We've got a great deer in the Four Acres."

"That's the one I've heard about," said I, "and that's the one I'm enquiring for."

"I'll arrange for the beaters to be ready in double-quick time," he said. "You go back and fetch the hounds."

I galloped back home, sending word on the way to as many as I could. We lost little time in getting back again with the pack. I shut them up at the farm while I and old Bob

King, my Whipper-in, went across to the Four Acres. There the beaters were all ready to go through the covert. I rode up for a word with them.

"Now, don't holloa, if you find him," I said, "but just whistle." Bob and I went down to the gate, he watching the outside while I had my eye down the ride, when we heard a whistle.

"By Jove! They've found him," I said, anxiously watching the ride in the expectation of seeing him come over. Bob called back:

"Here he is. And what a great devil, to be sure." The deer walked quietly out, and trotted across the park. "Keep your eye on him," I said to Baily, "and I'll go and fetch the hounds."

Riding back to the farm, I found the Field rather impatiently waiting. "Now, gentlemen," I told them, "you can make your minds up for a 'buster.' He's the biggest animal I ever hunted. Let 'em out Bob."

Gently together, hounds "full of fire," we trotted them over the park to where Baily

stood with his hat up. "Where's he gone?" "There he stands," replied Baily, "in that clump of trees."

I caught fast hold of my horse. "Here! Tally-ho! my boys," and into the clump I rode. Out he jumped, and away they went, all in view with him, and they settled to him, running very nicely up to Rowney Warren. Right through this, on over Chicksands Park, and up to Cainhoe Park Wood, straight through this as hard as they could drive, and up to Wrest Park.

There he jumped the park gates, and went down to the lake. How the hounds did it I shall never know, but they swam right down the whole length of that lake; they never checked, but on they went, and out of the park at the far end. By this time my cob was "blown," and Sam Baily, riding up, sang out:

"Here. Take my horse! It's of no use us going on without you."

I jumped on, and on we went, and when I got out into the road I could see them streaming away down the Silsoe meadows.

The first fence I came to on my borrowed mount was a stiff "stake and bound"; I rode him at it. He tried to come round; I kept him going, but he hit the top of it, and down we came.

I kept hold of the reins, however, jumped up, and we were on again without the loss of many moments. Right down the next great grass field, and then we came to another "rasper." However, I managed to get him over that one, and in the next field I saw the hounds do a thing I had never seen them do before, and one that I shall never again see accomplished.

There was a herd of a hundred black beasts in that field, and they heard the hounds coming; they started to run right down the field on the line of the deer. But the pack never checked! They raced up to the beasts, dropped down on the right of them, raced past them, "caught it" again beyond them, and on. A wonderful performance!

How I ever got over those meadows I shall never quite understand. Some of the fences

we went through, others over or in ; but the pace was too good to enquire about such trifling details, and the glorious excitement of the Chase was growing.

On they went, up to the Barton tollgate, and here another of those things happened which are sent into this life on purpose to try the tempers of huntsmen. There was by that time no one with the hounds but myself and Mr. Charles Lindsell, the pace had been so great.

"Open the gate my good woman!" I yelled, as we came galloping up towards it. She came crawling out of that cottage like an old hen before daybreak.

"D——ation take it!" I could not refrain from shouting. "Can't you see those hounds, running like h——bells! For heaven's sake open that gate!"

But of course the poor old lady then got flustered, and she fumbled about for what seemed an eternity before we got through.

But we got through at last. The deer had run the road, right past a workman who was

mending the highway, but nothing would have stopped the great devil then. Right over the Pulloxhill country we went. "For'ard, For'ard! My beauties. What a run!"

Somewhere about there Mr. Lindsell, jumped into a moat; but I saw that he was all right, and as the hounds were still running hard I could not stop. They ran along the top of the hill, and I galloped into Toddington.

"Here come the hunters!" all the Toddington children cried, "Tally-ho!"

"Yes," I said as I galloped past. "Here they come, and a nice lot of them too. I'm all by myself."

I turned down a lane out of Toddington, but I knew no more then where the hounds were than the dead. Fortunately I had not gone far when I saw them come right up to that lane. Over a stile, and away we went, pointing now for Hockliffe. My second horse was by that time getting very much the worse for wear. I turned round in my saddle, and saw that Mr. Lindsell was now coming up

again. But there was no chance to take a pull; gallop, gallop, gallop; on and on; field after field, and I only once saw the stag up to there.

Just below Hockliffe they ran up to him and bayed him; he stood in a corner of a field, with a great paling six or seven feet high round it. He looked round, and then over he went, turned a bit to the right, and they ran on a few fields more, nearly up to Eggington.

There he came back, down a lane, with the hounds all in view. I met him, and pulled my horse broadside across the lane. But he dropped his head, and I knew that he meant coming! That was a narrow shave, and I had the hardest work in the world to get out of his way. And when he had got past me I saw a shepherd a little farther down the lane, with his crook out as if to try and stop him.

"Get out of the way!" I shouted. "He'll kill you. Jump into the ditch!" He did, and only just in time. The shepherd

had his dog with him, and I shouted to him to set him on. He loo'ed him on, and away raced the dog, up to him, and was just going to spring when the deer let drive a fearful "cow-kick" at him, caught the poor brute in the ribs, toppled him over, and soon settled that poor shepherd's dog.

Then he went on, into a pond, and he soiled there. Several workmen had come up to us then, and they said "They" (the hounds) "have got him in that pond."

"Come along then, and help me" I said, "and I'll give you a sovereign."

But before we could get to work, out he went again and over some fields. My horse was then quite done. The quarry went over a big, wide brook, and I saw him going on up a long grass slade. As the hounds came down to me, I stopped them. I knew I could not get over that place, and if I had succeeded I could only have got a trot out of my horse.

My heart sank within me as I saw the great devil going on and on, up the hill. I

said to myself: "A great run. But d—— you! I have not taken you!"

Seventeen miles we had come, as the crow flies, and without a check, and I never touched them once. It was very hard luck for us that we did not take him, for he only went another mile or so, when he went into another pond, just this side of Leighton Buzzard. There a lot of navvies got some ropes, and took him, and a butcher named Hopkins shut him up in a coach-house.

A long time later some of the Field came up to us (Mr. Lindsell and I); among them was Baily, on my cob, Dr. Stevens, and a few more. On our way back to Hockliffe Sam Baily said to me:—

"I can feel something between my knees that keeps thumping. What is it?"

I said: "That's your horse's heart!"

"Will he die?" Sam asked.

"I would not like to say that he won't," I answered.

Just then Dr. Stevens rode up, and caught the words of our conversation. "Oh,

that's nothing" said he, "my horse has been thumping like that for the last hour."

I looked at his horse, and said to myself "Poor devil! You will never see Biggleswade again." And he did not; he died before half of the homeward journey was accomplished.

When we got back to Hockliffe, I shut up the hounds there for the night. Rumours of our great run were then getting about, and the local farmers and gentry came crowding into the hostelry where we had stopped for a pull and a bite. They looked amazed when I told them the country we had covered. I do not suppose they believed it, but went home to their wives and daughters, and told them what an excellent successor to the Baron Munchausen had come over for a ride from Biggleswade.

We came gently home, and arrived back at Biggleswade just as the church clock was striking the hour of midnight. And next day, although I had not taken the stag, the first thing I did after breakfast was to seek out

Pepper the clock-maker, and pay him the crown I had promised.

A day or two later I went over to Leighton Buzzard to see my fine fellow again, and to see about getting him away. We had no doubt that he had come into our country from the Duke of Bedford's park at Woburn, and it was my intention to arrange about getting him back there for His Grace. But the fame of the run quickly got spread abroad, and, in the meantime, I had a message from Mrs. Barnett, saying that she had received a letter from the Duchess of Bedford, asking her to see me and enquire if I would present the stag to the Queen (our late beloved Queen Victoria). They counted him as mine, because had I not hunted him, he never would have been taken alive.

Of course I was delighted to present the white hart to Her Majesty. And so the keepers from the Duke of Bedford's park went over, and they sent him to Windsor.

That was a run of which any Master might be proud. But I could not get that

deer out of my mind—You see, I had not taken him. And the following summer I went over to Windsor Park I *had* to make that visit, for I could not get rid of the hankering to see him again.

On my arrival I told them the object of my visit. I was surprised, and a little vexed, to meet with some amount of opposition. Then they fetched the head Ranger. To him, also, I related the purpose that had brought me from Biggleswade. I said :

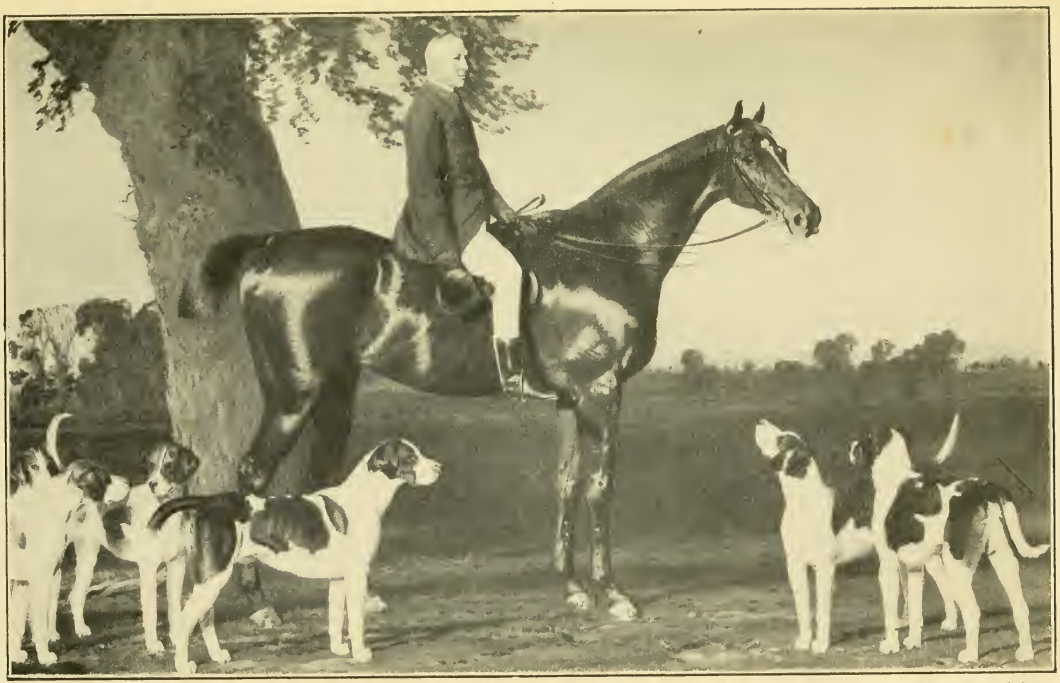
"I have come to see the white hart you have here."

"Well sir," he replied, "I'm very sorry. But you can't see him."

"Indeed," I enquired, for by now my dander was rising. "And why not?"

"Because I have had orders not to show him to anybody," he answered, also probably getting a little angry. "He's so wild," he added.

"Well," I said, "wild he may be, and a devil I *know* he is. But I have come from Biggleswade, in Bedfordshire, to see him.



By permission] [*Messrs. Spong & Son.*

Mr. Charles S. Lindsell, *late Master of the Cambridgeshire.*

And *I'm going to see him,* before you chuck me out of this park, and I return to the country where I found him."

He looked at me. "You are not the gentleman who hunted him, are you?" he asked.

"I have always taken the credit for doing so," I replied. There was no more opposition. "Come along, sir," he said. "I'll certainly show him to you. Why, if it had not been for you, and your hounds, we should never have had him here."

"There he is, sir," he said, as we came to a great enclosure where they kept him.

"Yes," I said, looking at him, as he stood there pawing and shaking his head. And again the words came back to me: "A wonderful run! But d—— you, I did not take you!"

That run was, without doubt, the best and hardest I ever rode to in my life. Mr. Lindsell and myself had almost the whole of it to ourselves, the pace was so great.

Seventeen miles, as the crow flies, without a check!

Chapter VIII.

HANDING OVER THE HORN.

I CANNOT explain all that it meant to me when I at last realised that the time had come for me to hand over the horn to somebody else. The year 1889 was the last season I hunted my pack, making a clear half century during which I carried the horn.

That was a pretty good innings, I must admit; far longer than it is permitted many men to enjoy such a privilege. And what days we had seen during those fifty years—what runs, what sport!

I met with an accident when a lad, in which I injured my right leg. Little was thought of it at the time, and certainly I cannot complain that the injury had thus

far interfered with my enjoyment of the Chase; but with increasing years the pain from the result of that early accident made it impossible for me to ride.

With a considerable feeling of grief I handed the horn to George Pope, who very capably filled the position of Huntsman for thirteen seasons, and then Charles Dyer, my Whipper-in, succeeded him, until he met with an accident, and I was then left without a Huntsman.

One Sunday afternoon that old friend of mine and great sportsman, George Evans, happened to call at the Old Road Farm. I told him the predicament I was in, and not thinking for one moment that he would accept the invitation—for he was then Master and was hunting the Cambridgeshire—I said to him:—

"Will you hunt them for the rest of the season, George?"

To my great surprise and delight he replied:—

"Yes, Mr. Race, I will."

I could not express my pleasure. "You shall, then," said I, "and no better Huntsman could I wish to find."

He went out into the Kennels there and then, and made acquaintance with the hounds. Next day, as the Cambridgeshire met on this side of their country, he called again, and again spent about half-an-hour with the pack. On the Tuesday he hunted them, and every hound in the pack knew him, and he knew every hound.

They found a hare that day on Mr. Hugh Smyth's farm at Edworth, and killed her on the Willbury Hills, a real good run, nearly a six-mile point.

George Evans finished that season with them, showing any amount of sport. He was a splendid sportsman, and one of the best Huntsmen I ever knew; but, like myself, he was a rare one to "let out" at everybody near him if the least little thing went wrong. Yet his Whipper-in, George Thomas, is very proud of being able to say that he turned hounds to him nearly every day he hunted

them, and he never "caught pepper" on any one occasion—at least, if he did it was under the Huntsman's breath; and I think he ought to be a very proud man, with all apologies to "Old George."

Then George Archdale succeeded him; George Pope followed him for one season, and since then the pack has been hunted by our present Huntsman, Stanley Price Davis, who I hope will continue to have them and hunt this country for many more seasons to come.*

I have claimed (and I think truly) that I was able to show plenty of sport with my pack during the fifty years I carried the horn; but not for one moment would I be mistaken as wishing to convey the impression that the others who followed me have not been equally successful. Many and many fine runs these hounds have had since I had reluctantly to forfeit the pleasure of handling them myself, right up to the present season. And I have

* Since going to Press, Mr. Davis has decided to give up the Biggleswade Harriers at the end of this season, and Mrs. Proctor, who has hunted with them of late, has consented to take them over.

always maintained that if hare-hunting is carried out on proper lines, the hare is capable of affording as good a gallop as any man need wish to ride to.

Here I would say again that I owe more than I can possibly express to the good and kind hospitality of the farmers whose land I hunted over during all those years. A better lot of sportsmen no Master of Hounds could possibly be associated with. And at the same time I would not forget those who have subscribed to the maintenance of the pack. But my friends know full well how deeply I appreciate their kindness.

On three occasions I have also been indebted to them for public presentations, when those friends and subscribers to the Hunt have been good enough to say many kind things about the sport my hounds have afforded. It is with a sense of sincere gratitude—and with no thought of boasting—that I mention those public testimonials. The first took the form of a handsome silver goblet and two silver tankards, which I still greatly

cherish; the second was a large framed portrait, in oils, of myself and two and a half couples of my hounds; and the third time, to mark my jubilee as a Master of Hounds, and on the occasion of handing over the horn, they were good enough to give me an illuminated address and an inscribed gold watch.

The Earl of Hardwicke presided at the public dinner when my jubilee was celebrated, and I could not be expected to repeat what was said of my pack and the good sport we had shown. That was in 1890, and some friends have kept reports of the speech in which I then tried to express my sense of the debt of gratitude which I felt that I owed all round. I have been asked to reproduce that acknowledgment here, and I hope no charge of egotism will be levelled against me if I do so. I said:—

"You have imposed upon me this day the most difficult task it has ever yet fallen to my lot to encounter—difficult, inasmuch as I know too well it is totally impossible for me to find language that can adequately convey to you how sincerely I appreciate this great, kind, and complimentary gathering. I can only beg of

you, one and all, to accept my most sincere, unfeigned, and heartfelt thanks, for having placed me in this proud and pleasing position. But how comes it, and what is it that has been instrumental to my being enabled to see this, my Jubilee Year with the hounds? Why, it is entirely owing to the goodness, kindness, and courtesy, of the owners and occupiers of the land; for if it had not been for their cordial co-operation, the pack would long ago have been dispersed, and I never should have been enabled to have seen this most triumphant day; and I hope those gentlemen will believe me when I tell them that all they have done for me will ever be remembered by me with feelings of the greatest gratitude.

"I must also thank you for your kind gift, but I hope you will, one and all, believe that I view the intrinsic value of it as mere dust in the balance when compared to the feeling it proclaims—when compared to the knowledge of my humble deeds having met with the approbation of such a body of gentlemen as I see here assembled.

"And now that I find my career with the hounds is fast drawing to a close, and also now I am daily finding that the time is not far distant when I shall be compelled to completely relinquish the joys of the Chase, how often, in the solitude of the hours with which I shall then have to contend, will the remembrance of this day, the remembrance of your gift, the

remembrance of all those I now see around me, tend to cheer and gladden the heart which now feels so deeply indebted to you.

"There are some few others whose names I must not omit to mention, they having interested themselves so much on my behalf:—And first and foremost amongst them I must beg of the noble lord in the chair, not only to accept my most sincere thanks for the vast extent of territory that he allows me to hunt over, but I must also sincerely thank his lordship for his great kindness in taking the chair on this occasion. I have also to thank my old friend, Mr. Hooper, for having for upwards of thirty years kindly acted as Secretary to the Hunt. Nor must I forget our huntsman, who for the last two years has so ably assisted me; and I can but think I have been exceedingly fortunate to have found a friend who so efficiently carries out the duties that devolve upon him. Now, gentlemen, there is one more who in no trifling measure has enabled me to see this joyous day, and that is no other than my good friend and faithful attendant and Whipper-in, 'Charles.' His attention to the pack, his attention to everything appertaining to sport, has relieved me of a considerable amount of trouble and anxiety, and rendered the keeping of the hounds a source of great pleasure to me; and when I am gone to 'that bourn whence none return,' whoever should be fortunate enough to possess his services, whether it be with the pack, with the stud,

or in the house of business, they will find in him a most obliging, polite and well-mannered man, and fully worthy of every confidence that may be reposed in him.

"Again I thank you, and also most fervently thank the Committee who have so ably and kindly arranged this gratifying gathering for me. I must simply say to you, that I trust you may one and all lead a long, long life; and, during the whole of that period, may you be surrounded by the brightest halo of happiness and prosperity. And now, gentlemen, after all the indulgence I have received for fifty years, and after what I have this day witnessed, I think I may safely say to myself:—

> "Let Fate do her worst, there are relics of joy,
> Bright dreams of the past, which she cannot destroy,
> That come in the night-time of sorrow and care,
> And bring back the features that joy used to wear.

"Rest assured that the words I have uttered have not been uttered as a mere figure of speech. Those words have been prompted by a heart fully sensible of the honour you have conferred upon me this day—a day to be remembered to the 'dying day' of the 'old man' who now stands before you—remembered too, with feelings of the greatest joy and satisfaction, mingled with feelings of the deepest sorrow that I shall never again be enabled to show you that amount of sport which it has ever been my aim and ambition to do."

There is a sadness one cannot avoid connected with all such valedictory occasions, and lest I should be tempted to dwell unduly on that theme, I will give you here, by way of contrast, a funny little incident that occurred to me one day, showing, as I have said before, that on one or two rare occasions I met with remonstrance from the occupiers of land in the country over which I hunted.

I was coming home one day when old Mr. N—— met me on the Biggleswade Common. "Hi! hi! Muster Race," he shouted. "Look, you here! I won't have you come galloping over my land any more. You think you're everybody, but I'll show you that you're not, and that you ain't got all the money in the world. I'll show up purses with you any day; yes, that I will."

I could see that he had worked himself up into a tearing rage, and he had lugged out a long canvas purse, which he was holding aloft and shaking at me in defiance as he rode up. I tried to soothe him, but that was quite impossible.

"I'll show purses with you," he repeated, jangling the money in his bag, and holding it up in my face. Then the spirit of mischief seized me. I looked at his horse, and I knew my mare could gallop, and could give him a burst.

"I can't show purses with you to-day," I said, "but I can give you a run for your money." With that I whipped away his bag of money, and setting spurs to my mare, galloped for all she was worth across the Common. The farmer came thundering after me.

"Hi! hi! Stop thief! Stop thief! Stop him! Stop him! He's got my purse!" he shouted at the top of his voice, although there was no trace of anybody in sight of us. I pulled up at last, and waited for the old man to arrive.

"Here's your purse, old friend," I said, "and I don't think you will find any of your money is missing. But I hope this little lark will remind you not to brag about your money in future."

That was my first, and last, attempt at highway robbery.

Like all Masters of subscription packs, I have been greatly indebted to those whose purses have been longer than mine. I once received a subscription from a gentleman who had collected a fiver for my pack. He sent it by a friend, and accompanying the subscription was a letter in verse, stipulating that I should similarly reply.

Unfortunately, a day or two later that gentleman's horse dropped dead while he was hunting, and on receiving the news I wrote to my friend :—

"Oh Edward, my boy, I am sorry indeed,
To hear of the death of poor Clowes's steed ;
But sincerely I thank you for getting his 'blunt'
To aid and assist in maintaining the Hunt.
Your verses I read when reclining in bed,
Then on to the pillow I dropped my old head
And thanked the Almighty you had his 'blunt' fast,
Before his poor horse had breathed out his last."

Some people I have heard talking would give one the impression that they think field

sports should only be enjoyed by the high and wealthy. That is far from my view, and sorry, indeed, should I be to see the sports of the field—one of the sources of our national pride and honour—confined to any one class exclusively.

But this I must say, that a man who has a family to support by his daily labour or exertions in business, has no right to neglect that family for pursuits for which it must be quite evident that he cannot afford either the money or time. Let him first place himself beyond poverty, and provide against a rainy day, and then enjoy himself as much as he pleases in the health-giving joys of our English field sports, chief of which I rank the Chase.

And now, enough of this "preaching," because I am anxious to also pay a tribute to another great friend and supporter of the Hunt, namely the Puppy-walker. I put him next in importance to the farmer, and the success of the Hunt is in no small measure due to them. Without the co-operation and

help of those good friends we should never be able to build up a pack. I look upon the Puppy-walker as the backbone of the Hunt. It would be impossible for any Master to improve Fox-hounds or Harriers were it not for his friend who takes a puppy, or couple, until they are ready to be entered. We all know that every puppy is associated with a certain amount of mischief, but then, even if he does run away with a brush, break a little china or glass, or tear up the Missus's petticoat, is he not readily forgiven when you walk up, with your heart full of pride, to accept the cup at the puppy-judging, or when you see him, or her, later, in the field, make a wonderful cast, and get them all out of difficulties, and when you hear the Huntsman remark "Good old girl! She's done it again." Then are you not again a proud man, and do you not say to yourself:—"Who wouldn't walk a puppy?"

MY OLD HORN.

Though toil hath somewhat worn thy frame,
And time hath marred thy beauty,
Come forth—lone relic of my fame—
Thou well hast done thy duty.

Time was when other tongues would praise
Thy wakening notes of pleasure,
Now, miser-like, alone I gaze
On thee—a useless treasure.

Some hearts may prize thy music still,
But ah ! how changed the story,
Since first my comrades felt the thrill
That roused their sporting glory.

Grace still in every vale abounds,
Yet one dear charm is wanting—
No more I hear my gallant hounds,
In chorus blithely chaunting.

And there my steed has found a rest,
Beneath the springing heather,
That oft, like comrades sworn, we pres't
In pleasure's train together.

And some, who at thy call would wake,
Hath friendship long been weeping;
A shriller note than thine must break
Their deep and dreamless sleeping.

I, too, the fading wreath resign,
(For friends and fame are fleeting,)
Around his bolder brow to twine,
When younger blood is beating.

Henceforth be mute, my treasured horn,
Since time hath marred thy beauty,
And I, like thee, by toil am worn—
We both have done our duty.

G.T.

(*Sportsman Magazine, 1833.*)

Chapter IX.

SHOOTING AND FISHING.

I HAVE always classed the Chase as the chief of our English field sports, but when our days of hard riding are over there are others which still appeal strongly to us. Throughout my long life I have been fond of a gun, and in this direction also many days of good sport have I enjoyed.

Here again one cannot help remarking upon the great change that has taken place since I was a boy. Take, for instance, the modern hammerless, breech-loading gun, ejector and everything up-to-date, and compare it with the old muzzle-loader of my early days! But do not run away with the idea that just because the style of the gun has altered, the man behind it has improved beyond us likewise. No such thing! We

could "nobble them" in the old days, and perhaps with our old-fashioned muzzle-loaders we could have cut the combs of some of the present generation of "sportsmen."

Next to my hounds I loved a good pointer, and that intelligent animal is absolutely essential if you are to have good sport with the gun. I believe I once had as good a pointer as ever went into a field, old "Rocket." He was a beautiful creature, and no dog could make a better "point."

I was out with him one day with a friend who had another pointer. We were going up a bit of stubble, and both dogs "stood." "Which shall we have first?" my friend asked.

"Oh," said I, "let's have your lot first." "Stand, Rocket!" I called.

We got two brace out of his covey, and then we gathered them. Rocket still "stood," and we went back to him and a nice covey got up and we had a leash out of them.

He was a wonderful dog. I had a grey mare once, and I could give old Rocket the

reins and he would lead her anywhere I told him. Up town one day with that mare and Rocket, I stopped outside a butcher's.

"Hold this mare," said I to the butcher, "and I will go down to 'The Swan.' When I send this dog for her just give him the end of the reins."

I walked down to the hotel, and after a short time I said "Fetch her" to Rocket. Away he trotted, and came back with her as orderly as you please.

You may be "had" as nicely when buying a dog as when buying a horse. I acquired a very good looking dog in London once, and brought him home and made a great fuss of him. After I had had him a few days I took him out. He ranged very well, and at last he "stood"—a beautiful "point."

I had only given half-a-sovereign for him, and when I saw this I was uncommonly delighted with my bargain. "Here," said I, "is a treasure."

Walking very gently across to the bunch of nettles where he "stood," I was astonished

when nothing got up. I looked, and I could see nothing in them. "Fetch it," I said to him. In he jumped, and out hopped a big frog, and then I am afraid that, had the parson been there I should have shocked him. What occurred to the silly d——? I gave him such a kick that he bolted across that field, jumped the gate, and disappeared. I troubled no more about him, and probably somebody had another "good bargain" with him; at any rate I never saw him again.

Pointers are never considered complete in training unless they are perfectly staunch to bird, dog and gun; which implies: first, standing singly to a bird, or covey, secondly to backing or pointing the moment he perceives another dog to stand at game, and thirdly, not to stir from his own point at the rising of any bird or the firing of any gun in the field, providing the game is neither sprung nor started at which he originally pointed.

I think my dog Rocket was as near perfection in these respects as you could possibly get a pointer. He was also a nice colour, and

had the best of necks and shoulders ; no doubt he threw back to the Spanish pointer. Perhaps few people know that the English pointer comes of Spanish blood, but is of a much lighter form. He was originally obtained by a cross of the Spanish and the fox-hound, and has since been re-crossed with the harrier ; and in my opinion he is far and away the nicest and most interesting dog a sportsman can shoot over. Of course, in the Midlands, nowadays, the chances for him to exhibit his abilities have greatly diminished ; the days when we shot over beautiful high stubbles have disappeared, and in place of them we now have great ugly kitchen gardens.

"The noble dog, in life the firmest friend,
The first to welcome, foremost to defend ;
Whose honest heart is still his master's own,
Who labours, fights, lives, breathes for him alone."

How beautifully and aptly Byron has described him ! Such a delightful companion in life was my old Rocket.

I have headed this chapter "Shooting and Fishing," but I must at once confess that the

rod and line have never had much attraction for me. I do not wish to be thought prejudiced against a sport which I know gives so much keen delight to those thousands of my fellow men who have the angling instinct; but I have experienced no such love for old Isaac Walton's art, and have never made any pretence of understanding it.

Only one day's fishing have I ever had in my life. That was a great many years ago, but it made such a good impression on me that it lasted me the rest of my life.

That was one fine, hot day in September. A friend, who was visiting me, had on the previous evening announced his desire for "a good, all-round day's sport." I thought I could accommodate him, and at least was determined to try.

We turned out at six o'clock next morning, and went cub-hunting. We had a very good morning, and came home hungry to breakfast. Afterwards I said: "Now we will go out and kill a few brace of birds," which we did, having the luck to knock down six and a half

brace. We came in to lunch. I was by that time hoping that the keen edge of his appetite for sport had worn off.

But he wanted to finish the day with some fishing, and I may add that he was a keen fisherman. We drove over to Holme Mills, and he there fixed me up with a rod, line and bait, and told me to fish above the Mills, while he would try the river lower down.

I made myself comfortable on a foot-plank over the water. And there I sat watching that d——n float, and feeling a perfect fool. Nothing came my way—I did not expect it would—and at last I must have fallen asleep. I don't know how long I slumbered, but it must have been for a great while, and when I awoke and moved, I as nearly as "nicket" fell backward into the river. That brought me to my senses, and I remembered that I was a "fisherman."

Rubbing my eyes, I looked for the float. For the life of me I could not see it. "By George—a bite!" said I, "and to think that

I have been asleep like an old hen in the sun, and had the luck to wake up just in the nick of time!"

Looking out into the middle of the river, there, for certain, was my float, bobbing about. I stood up, all the instincts of an accomplished angler at last alive within me. With all my strength I gave a great haul, and out came a roach about four inches in length, and up he went into the tree at the back of me, and fish and line lodged there.

A small boy was passing. "My lad," said I, "You see that great fish up the tree. Climb up and get it, and I'll give you sixpence."

The lad knew me well, and grinned most provokingly upon seeing me with a fishing rod, and divining just what had happened. But he climbed the tree. Before he had earned his sixpence my friend returned.

"What luck, George?" he enquired.

"Oh," I replied, as nonchalantly as possible, "I have caught a fish."

"Good. Where is it?" he exclaimed.

"You see that top bough of the tree that the boy is climbing to," I answered. "Well, it's up there."

"Too strong in the arm, my boy," said he, "for this sort of fishing in the Ivel."

After a lot of trouble the lad secured my prize, and I took it home, with the crazy idea of having it stuffed, like I have seen other big fish stuffed and hung up in cases in the smoking parlours of our hotels. I had gathered a fairly good collection of masks, antlers, etc., during my career, and I had some idea of adding this trophy to my treasures. It wanted a lot of persuasion on the part of my sporting friend to convince me that—not having caught anything himself—he was not jealous, and that, *really*, my magnificent capture was not sizeable.

That was my first and last experience of fishing as a pastime, and even when my hunting days were over I was never tempted to repeat it. No doubt that, to be a skilled and successful angler, one must have a lot of patience; my friends who know me best assert that therein I am most lacking.

Turning back to shooting, I have always thought that the old-fashioned style of shooting over a pointer was a much prettier sight, and in other ways superior to the modern method of killing partridges in September. Many a time on arriving at a field I wished to beat, I have said to old Rocket, "Hold up!" And I have watched him beat that field as cleverly as though he had human intelligence, until he found and "stood." Then I have walked quietly over to him and bagged my game. Dear old Rocket saved me many miles of walking.

3½ COUPLES OF THE BEST.

MR. KAY.

TOM WHITMORE. CHARLES DYER. MR. OWEN CARPENTER.

MR. W. CARTER MITCHELL. MR. GEORGE RACE. FRED COX *(the late Queen's Huntsman).*

Chapter X.

OLD FRIENDS.

I HAVE paid tribute to several old friends who have been associated with me in various experiences during my long hunting career. No man has been blessed with friends more worthy, staunch and true than it has been my good fortune to know, and I should be churlish, indeed, if I did not record my great appreciation of those sterling good fellows. Thinking of them all again brings a tinge of sadness, for many of the comrades with whom I have ridden, with whom I have afterwards dined, and with whom, in the evening of our days, I have fought over again so many of our battles and achievements, have now passed into the great Unknown. Shall I be thought irreverent if I express the hope that there will be found plenty of good hunting in that other

world, because without the joys of the Chase some of the good friends I have known will, I am quite sure, be far from happy.

Let the old man recall them as they occur to him, and some of the memories that their faces conjure up again. There was Fred Hogg, who will be remembered by many of my readers. A good man, and one who was never happier than when he was out with us. I can plainly see him now as he came to the meet one morning, in the beginning of the season. The old gentleman had donned a new red coat, and with top hat, glossy boots, and gloves, he was every inch a sportsman. "Got up to the nines," as we used to say. He was riding a grey mare, and after we had found and had been running nicely for some time, I met him under the wall at Stratford, near Sandy, and, oh dear! how his glory had departed. I do not think that in all my life, and with all my experience of many and various spills, I ever saw a man in quite such a pickle. He was covered with black, slimy mud, from head to feet.

"Why, old man," said I, "where on earth have you been?"

"Ah, George! Ah, George!" said he, "I've been into a bog. And I've been there snipe-shooting all my life, and yet this morning I was fool enough to ride straight into it. Ah, George! Ah, George! There's no fool like an old fool."

But that was the sort of thing he often did—more from headstrong foolhardiness than anything. I hope it will not be thought that I say that in disparagement of my old friend, because no man thought more of him than I did. On another occasion, fox-hunting, we had run to Castle Mills. The hounds had done nothing that day, and they lost the fox. There was no intention of going over the river, and the Field stood on the river bank. The miller was leaning out of one of the windows of his mill watching us.

"Miller, can I get over here?" called out my old friend.

"Yes, sir," was the answer, "but you must be very careful. When you get half-way over pull to your right."

Into the river he went, although there was not the slightest necessity for going over. He got half-way across and the miller began shouting, "Pull to your right! Pull to your right!" Instead, Fred pulled to the left. "You'll be in a great hole in a minute!" yelled the miller, "Pull to your right!"

Not he! To the left he went, and a minute later under went both horse and rider. and he was lucky, I can tell you, that we were able to get him out alive.

But Fred Hogg was a fine judge of hunting. I once sold my first pack and bought another. We had had a very good run one day, but puss had beaten me. On the return journey my old friend rode up to me and characteristically expressed his opinion of the new pack, much to their detriment in comparison with the old hounds.

"I'm glad she beat you, you blood-thirsty old rascal," he said, chuckling with great glee.

"But if it had been the old pack they would not have lost her. They would have said one to another, 'You go and smell there, and I'll go and smell here,' and they would have cast about until they had smelt her out. Ah, your old hounds would never have been beaten like this, and I'm glad she has cheated you."

That was a very sore point with him—selling those hounds that we had got to know so well. There never was a day that we were out but the old gentleman was with us, and he fondly loved that pack. And of course he was right. Many and many a time I also regretted that I had parted with them.

A man must be a born sportsman, and must then have years of experience, before he becomes a good judge of hunting. But Fred Hogg was a good judge. After they had settled in about three fields he always knew. He would ride up alongside of me and call out "Come along old man! We're off. Come on," and the extraordinary thing about it was that he was always right. Ah, Fred! "Gosh, gosh!" You were always full of fun. Cele-

brated far and wide for your neat turn-out, generally on a horse that might have been taken as a model hunter. And your never-failing good humour rendered you a most agreeable member of what we used to call "the coffee house" of the hunting field.

To my life-long friend, Charles Samuel Lindsell, I could not refrain from paying, quite early in this book, the highest tribute in my power. He was more than my friend, he was a brother. The runs we had together! And the boxes of cigars we have smoked as we have lived over again the days that are gone! A great man in the field, the sport was in his blood. A perfect English gentleman of the best school, who never failed in his duty, and who was never too busy to lend an ear to another's difficulties, to give counsel of the wisest, and aid of more substantial kind if it were wanted. Charlie, my lad, you are often in my thoughts in these late days.

Catching another line, let us hunt up to Sam Ongley. He was one of the best, and as a sportsman he was as perfect as you could make

one. Sam always had a kind word for everybody, and his heart was as big as a lion's; a most respected and well-liked man.

Sam was a sport of the old school, seemed to live in the saddle, and he was the last man in the world you would accuse of being a bookworm. He used to live well, and in his latter years he suffered a good deal from the gout. He was laid up by this old enemy one day, and while we were out a friend from the other side of the country enquired after Sam's welfare. Somebody who had called to see him that morning, said:—

"Oh, he's a lot better. When I went up to him, he was reading a book."

"What?" came the enquiry from several of us, "Sam Ongley reading a book?"

"Yes," was the straightforward answer.

"I'll bet you a sovereign he was not," said one of them.

"But, my good sir, I saw him."

"No offence to you, sir. But I'll bet you a sovereign old Sam was not reading a book."

"Well," said the other, "If you wish to be so pig-headed, I'll take your sovereign."

It was agreed that several of us should ride round that way home, and make enquiries to settle the bet. We trooped up into the old gentleman's bedroom, and very happy he was to see some of his comrades.

"When I called to see you this morning, were you reading a book?" asked the gentleman with whom the bet had been made.

"No," said old Sam, with a comical shake of his head. "I was only looking at the pictures."

On another occasion he was laid up, Sam sent for his stud groom. "Matting," said he, "That bay horse wants some exercise. Take him out with the Harriers."

Matting brought him, but the man had never before been out hare-hunting. On his return, his master was naturally curious to hear his opinion of that sport. "What do you think of hare-hunting?" he enquired of Matting.

"Sir," said the old groom, "It put's me in mind of gruffling arter meice, more'n anything."

A nice compliment to hare-hunting!

I have already given my opinion of Charles Barnett, than whom no better man ever rode to hounds. It was my great pleasure to once render Mr. Barnett and the Cambridgeshire a service of which, I think, I had some right to feel proud. During his Mastership they were at one time very short of funds, and as I was riding on to covert with him one morning he said to me:—

"What a pity it is, George. Meyers (who lived at the Hardwicke Arms, Wimpole) is going to give up collecting for us, and we are darnation hard up for funds. Who can we get to take on that most necessary work?"

I said to him, after thinking it over for a minute, "I will."

"Capital!" he exclaimed, "and so you shall." Now to show the difference between those days and these, may I say that in a very short time I collected over £900 from

the University and the farmers in the Cambridgeshire country. I understand that many Masters experience difficulty now in getting the funds in. How is it? Does not the Chase appeal to the present generation as it did to their fathers?

Among other old friends and good huntsmen, there was that rattling good fellow, Tom Sebright. His name takes me back to a great run they had one day in my father's time. After having a very good hunt indeed in the morning, they found again in Hunt's Closes. They ran their fox to Tempsford Bridge, and I cannot say that they there lost him, because John Walker—one of the very best men over that country—was the only one up with them when they ran up to Tempsford.

That was one of the best runs in this country on record, covering quite 22 miles, and being at least a 14 miles point.

In the early part of the run Lord M—— was galloping on just ahead of John Walker, when his hat blew off.

"Jump off and pick my hat up, will you?" he asked.

"What!" exclaimed old John, as he galloped past his lordship. "Not I! I would not stop to pick my own up, so —— yours, or anybody else's."

There was not much that would stop John Walker when they were running but that burst brought him to a standstill—for he was riding his famous mare, and even she got thoroughly blown. Near Tempsford he saw the fox go out of the field as the hounds came in, and as that field was fresh sown it checked them; however, they righted themselves, and ran on down to old John, who stopped them—for which my father never fully forgave him. After waiting for ten minutes, Tom Sebright came up on a farmer's cob.

"Now Tom" he said, "the fox has gone out of the field at that corner, and he has been gone ten minutes. You can go on if you like, but my mare has dropped into a trot,

and I won't go another yard for you or anybody."

"It's no use me going on alone," said Tom. "I don't know a yard of this country."

So they went back to John Walker's place at Eaton Socon and stayed there the night.

One evening, after meeting the fox-hounds at Everton and enjoying a thoroughly good day, we dined with Mr. King, at Potton. After dinner the conversation naturally turned to the day's sport. A gentleman (who we will call Mr. C——) was one of the guests, and I remembered that I had not seen much of him during the latter part of the day's hunting. We had found in White Wood, ran over Tempsford Bottoms, right-handed up to Highfields, and on up to Eltisley. I did not remember our friend C—— in that run, and enquired where he had got to.

"Oh," said he, "that was all due to my brute of a horse. Soon after we found, I dropped my whip and had to get off to pick it up. Then he would not let me get on again,

and round and round we went until we both grew giddy. However, I cruppered him at last."

"What did you do?" we asked.

"Tied the brute fast to a fence with both reins, and then mounted him."

This was greeted with shouts of laughter, but our friend C—— was evidently quite in earnest. "But what did you do then?" I asked.

"Had to get down again, of course," said he, "and untie him."

We found that it was true, and that he had had to walk the beggar home. That set the fun going, and round and round we sent the old bottle. And as the port began to warm us—right down to our toes—we "fought our battles o'er again," and after "thrice we'd slain the slain" the time came for coats and gigs, and off on our homeward journey.

"A real good sort," we all voted our host of that evening. "His port wants a lot of

beating, and—I wonder if they will run to-morrow."

I come next to Harry Bolton. How shall I sing his praise in a manner worthy of him? It is not enough to say that he was a good sportsman—we held him as a model. He was known by all throughout this and several other hunting countries, and to know him was to love him. Here's my cap off to you, Harry!

Thinking of Harry Bolton, I cannot help going back to a wonderful run the Oakley Hounds once had from Shelton Gorse. There was a great noise about it, and some lines were written in verse by a gentleman who called himself "Quis."

He wrote of the glories of the Oakley Hounds, and he mentioned people from Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, and alluded to the others as strangers. He made out that our "Lincoln Green" men were nowhere in the hunt, and among other hard-riding men, Harry Bolton certainly did not receive justice. This so upset my father that he wrote a reply

to "Quis" and called it "Lincoln Green," from which I would like to take some short extracts. Poor Harry Bolton, a great friend of mine and my father's, was placed "nowhere" by "Quis," so this was the governor's reply :—

"Oh Harry, my worthy, Oh who has disgraced you,
And in Shelton Gorse Run so shamefully placed you,
And mixed you so up with the Blacks and those varlets
Who only come out to appear in their scarlets ?
Stick, stick, my fine fellow, stick close to your order,
And never be mixed with such muffs on a border.
You know with what contempt we eyed them at Bromham,
When you came alongside and slipped away from 'em ;
How we laughed in our sleeves when you went at the brook,
To think 'ere they took it how ghastly they'd look ;
How each coat on their back would blush redder and deeper
To find that it only encompassed a creeper.
Yet no mention is made of those who are gone
To that awful tribunal whence none can return ;
Who I've seen in my youth go so straight at their fences
That would frighten the present pinks out of their senses."

At the end of "Lincoln Green" he put the following:—

P.S.

"I here meant to finish but I took one more look,
Found my anger was rising whilst reading his book;
When I saw that from Eaton he had gone seven miles
To hunt up a man who could jump over stiles.
He need not have gone far—might have shortened his search,
Had he only stepped over the way from the Church.
There resides one who never was yet in a funk,
And been followed by Sebright, and Ongley, and Monk.
And shall he who has shone amidst such constellation
Be left out of a run with this soft generation?
Oh, Harry, I'm sick, I'm disgusted, can't bear it!
'Tis libel, stuff, nonsense, egad I won't hear it!
Who believes in a Bedfordshire run that was fast
With John Walker nowhere—Harry Bolton placed last?"

Bill Pope, who has been with me on more runs than I care to remember, was born with the instincts of the Chase. He was kind to all, and for his size he took his place in a run, and never was known to haul down his colours. One of the few men of whom it can

be said that no one ever beat him. His, too, was a lion's heart, but a soft one.

Thomas Hooper, our worthy Hon. Secretary, collected many pounds to assist in maintaining the Hunt. When riding to hounds, no one had a better knowledge of the game. He was mostly "there or thereabouts." And Thomas was noted also for his fine, crusty, old port. Genial and kind, and much respected.

Another good-hearted man was Fred Archdale. He possessed every good trait of a true English sportsman, inherited from all branches of a sporting family. He was a "nailer" to hounds, quick in a burst, first to a fence, and away "at the tail of the hounds."

I have mentioned in a previous chapter that my old friend, Will Chapman, a highly esteemed lawyer, who resided at Potton, was somewhat prone to be jealous in the field. Yet he was a very good sportsman, and a true and staunch supporter of the Hunt. I had a great disappointment one day, in connection with him. Before dinner one evening I was

enjoying a cigar at my gate, when I saw "Putty" A——, a well-known local character come swinging along the Biggleswade and Potton road. While he was some little distance off I perceived that he had been drinking again—for Putty had periodical outbursts. He gave me "Good-day" civil enough, and, of course, I replied to him kindly. Putty stopped, and then I guessed from the working of his face and other signs of excitement, that somebody had been having a game with him.

"Well, Putty," said I, "What is it?"

"I'm going over to Potton," he said, "to see Lawyer Chapman."

"Yes," I said, "and what's up between you and Lawyer Chapman?"

"He's got a lot of money of mine," Putty continued somewhat sullenly—"and I'm going to have it, or I'll let Lawyer Chapman know why," he suddenly blazed out.

I began to see the drift of things. That was a mania with Putty. He was always under the delusion that somebody had got a

lot of money which really belonged to him. I began to "get the hang of the joke" some wag at Biggleswade had been having.

"Wouldn't you, sir?" he asked. "Wouldn't you make a man sit up, who'd got a lot of *your* money?"

"Yes, certainly I would," said I, scenting some rare good sport that we might have with my lawyer friend, and hoping for a lark that would provide a subject for after-dinner banter for a long time to come. "Certainly I would," said I. "You go over and pitch into Lawyer Chapman, Putty. Tell him you have come for your money, and you mean to have it. Those lawyer chaps are always trying to get the blind side of somebody. Don't you be fooled by him any longer. Get into the house, and don't let them pitch you out again until you have got your money."

Any doubt that might have been lingering in Putty's mind was now dispelled. "I will," he asserted, and knowing Putty as I did, I did not doubt that he *would.*

"Look you here," said I, calling him back, for Putty was off again, and was already some distance on the way to Lawyer Chapman's, "If you will call in as you come back, and let me know how you get on with him, you shall have a jug of my best old ale." Putty faithfully promised to look in on his return.

I went in, dined, and laughed hugely to myself as I thought of a score of ways in which we would tease poor old Will. The evening wore on, but Putty did not appear. Ten o'clock, and then half-past, and I began to fear that either the lawyer had been too astute for us, or that our man had been made too drunk. At last I went to bed in disgust.

That was on a Saturday night, and nothing was seen or heard of Putty until the following Monday evening. I was coming in with my hounds, when I saw him coming from the direction of Potton, not nearly so blithely as he had set out on his quest for wealth. As he drew near I observed a "hang-dog" look about him that certainly

did not seem to indicate that Putty had "come into his own again."

"Hello, Putty!" I called to him. "You did not come back that night to try my old brown ale. Did the lawyer give you your money?"

"No," said Putty, as he spat into the dust with a grimace of mingled dejection and disgust; "But he clapped me into the Cage, and I've only just got out again."

For years I did not mention the incident to my legal friend, nor did I ever hear him refer to it. He must have wondered many times who got poor old Putty drunk and set him on to him. To this day I do not know the wag who began the joke, but I told Will, at last, of the small part I had had in it. And quite unreasonably he for ever afterwards set the whole incident down to my account.

I have, when I come to look at it, had a very good innings, and have been a very lucky man. And nobody could have been supported by a better lot of sporting farmers

and friends than it has been my lot to be mixed up with. That is a source of great comfort to me in my old age,—to think of the lots of friends who have stuck to me all through the chapter. I only wish I could have it all over again, but as we all know, there is an ending to everything, and thus even the goodness and kindness of life's true friendships must one day have an end. Still the Chase calls to me, and as I see my hounds start off on a nice hunting morning, and as I watch old Hasty, and Riot, and Wakeful, sniffing the air and trotting out expectantly, well knowing the good time that, with luck, lies in store for them that day, there comes over me a feeling of sadness, and "age laments life's vigour spent."

THE END.